



# PLATO'S THEOLOGY

*By*

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN

*Assistant Professor of Classics  
in Cornell University*



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TO  
LIESELOTTE SOLMSEN



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## Preface

MOST students of ancient philosophy or thought would probably agree to-day that there is a Platonic Theology distinct from the Theory of Ideas, though of course not unrelated to it. Or, if this statement is too confident, they would at least admit that any theory that identifies Plato's Theology with his Philosophy of Ideas, or with some other phase of his philosophy, should be tested by an examination of the theological views and suggestions of doctrine contained in Book 10 of the *Laws*, a book which, like the rest of the *Laws*, has long been unduly neglected. It is one of the present author's main objects to make up for this neglect, and to relate this important body of thought both to the more central phases of Plato's philosophy and to the development of Greek thought in general.

In trying to determine the place of theological speculation within the orbit of Plato's own thought, the author has been greatly helped by the investigations of other recent scholars in the same field. But he cannot say as much with regard to the second part of his task; for hitherto an attempt to place Book 10 of the *Laws* in the history of Greek thought has hardly been made. To be sure, there are books—and some of them, like Edward Caird's *Gifford Lectures*, rightly considered authoritative—that deal with the history of Greek theology, and that naturally include chapters on Plato's contribution. But it is in these very chapters that the neglect of the *Laws* to which I have referred makes itself felt; in them some phase or other of his philosophy is arbitrarily made to represent his contribution to theology, while his elaborate refutation of atheism and his reconstruction of religion are too much ignored.

It is typical of the situation that the author of the present book had first of all to face a crucial question: to which part or parts

of the Greek tradition should Plato's Theology, and in particular Book 10 of the *Laws*, be related. The present author knows that a decision on this point involves a risk, and that he may easily have made a mistake. But, while aware of Plato's debt to the religious ideas of earlier thinkers, and especially to the ideas of the 'Pre-socratics', he nevertheless felt that certain essential phases of Plato's religious philosophy might be better approached from another side. It seemed to him that the close relation between State and religion, which is so characteristic of classical Greek civilization, is fundamental to Plato's final approach to religion, and so should be fundamental in a modern attempt to understand that approach. Accordingly, in the first chapter I have sketched a general picture of Greek 'civic religion', and in the two following chapters have attempted to describe what happened to this form of religion before Plato. It was inevitable that in Chapters II and III a good deal of well-known and much-treated material should be once more discussed, and the justification of these chapters is not that they have anything very new to say (though I hope that some novelty may be found in the arrangement); rather they are needed to bridge the gulf between the earlier part of the fifth century and Plato's own time.

First of all, I wish to thank the editors of the Cornell Studies in Classical Philology for accepting in the series a book which is one more venture in a field where controversy between different schools of thought is probably more acute than in any other part of the study of Greek Literature. The editors have put me still deeper in their debt by a great number of valuable suggestions relating both to matter and to the form of presentation. From Professor Lane Cooper I have learnt a great deal more than would appear from the few footnotes in which his name is mentioned. Professor M. L. W. Laistner has been kind enough to read the first chapter and to make certain critical comments which I have tried to meet. I have discussed various points with Professor E. R. Goodenough, and others with Professor A. D. Nock, to whom I am also obliged for a number of bibliographical references. Going farther back, I must acknowledge my profound indebtedness to

the teaching of Professor Werner Jaeger, to whom my approach to Plato owes more than to anyone else.

Miss Irene Samuel and Mrs. Irène Underwood have given me invaluable help in preparing the copy. Dr. Abbie M. Copps of Olivet College has assisted me in correcting the proofs.

The translations of Plato used in this book are taken from Jowett unless another translator is specified in the Notes. Where translations of other Greek writers have been used the translators are likewise mentioned in the Notes.

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN

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**PLATO'S THEOLOGY**  
**THE BACKGROUND**





## RELIGION IN THE CITY-STATE

PLATO's theology developed in close alliance with his philosophy of nature, but his final and most comprehensive discussion of the subject forms a part of the *Laws*, a work devoted to political philosophy. The reader who looks in the twelve books of the *Laws* for the last formulation of Plato's thought on the State, law, communal life, and political education may well be astonished to find side by side with these subjects a number of very important theological propositions supported by an extensive inquiry into the different kinds of movement and by speculations about the nature of the heavenly bodies. He can hardly be blamed if he considers disquisitions of this kind foreign to the actual theme of the work and inclines to regard the insertion of such 'heterogeneous' material into a discourse on politics as evincing a weakness for which he thinks he has found evidence elsewhere in the *Laws*, a pleasant but at times rather irritating talkativeness on the part of the old philosopher, a tendency to indulge in digressions, and to lose sight of the main thread of his argument. The student of Plato's religious thought, on the other hand, may be prone to ignore the politico-legislative background of the theological discussion, and to dwell on what he considers essentially timeless, the religious ideas in it. But is it not rash to assume that the combination in one and the same work of two subjects like the State and religion, distinct or even heterogeneous as they may seem, is irrelevant for the understanding of Plato's thought on either of them? May it safely be left out of account, or treated as a mere literary device? The combination may seem to have little or no meaning for the modern reader and may yet indicate that the author felt a close and intrinsic connection between the two subjects.

Now the question whether the relation between the State and religion which Plato establishes in the *Laws* is organic or artificial must be decided through a close examination of the work itself, and we shall have to revert to the subject in later chapters of this book; but in order to understand Plato's last approach and final contribution to the problems of religion, something must now be said about the relation between these two spheres of human life, the religious and the political, in the times and generations preceding Plato.

It would be futile to deny that the Greeks recognized the presence of their gods in sky, earth, and sea, in rivers and trees, forests and mountains, or that philosophical speculation before Socrates and Plato had been at pains to define more and more precisely the nature, status, and significance of God in relation to *Physis* and *Cosmos*. There seems to be little danger that this aspect of Greek religion and this source of Greek theology will be overlooked. On the other hand, many students of Greek religion have given scant attention to the place and function of the gods in the political life and organizations of the Greeks. Not every reader of Euripides bears in mind that the gods whose nature the thinkers and poets of the fifth century discussed were the guardians and divine symbols of the Greek cities. Finally, no attempt as yet has been made to understand Plato's theology against the background of what may be called the political or—as Nilsson puts it <sup>1</sup>—the 'civic religion' of the Greeks.

As a general proposition, it would probably be admitted to-day that the Greek deities, in their own natures and characters, participated in the essential development of Hellenic civilization. Thus, when the Greeks were, first and foremost, citizens, the Greek gods became citizens as well; and when the individual Greek's life, status, and well-being were bound up with the existence of his city, the same thing held true of his gods and goddesses. We shall give particular attention to the relation between the city and its deity which developed in Athens, for the two-fold reason that the sources of knowledge available for Athens are richest, and that Athens was Plato's city.

In the *Iliad* all the gods take sides, some of them favoring and

supporting the Greek cause, others that of the Trojans; but the one goddess to whom the women of Troy turn, to implore her help and protection, while the men are trying to stem the Greek advance, is Athena.<sup>2</sup> The women hope that Athena will identify herself with the cause of Troy; but she turns a deaf ear to their prayers, and is not swayed by their gift of a *peplos*. The concept of a city-protecting deity is but one strand in Homeric religion, and hardly the most important. Yet it was destined to become of first-rate importance. When in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* Eteocles and, in a different frame of mind, the women of Thebes, beg the gods to save their city from the enemy, or when we read in Herodotus that the Athenians in the year 480 were deeply affected by the realization that the goddess had left the city,<sup>3</sup> we need not hesitate to consider such episodes significant evidence of contemporary Greek belief and feeling. The gods in general, and the deity of the city in particular, are its protector. 'Athens . . . will never perish by the destiny of Zeus or the will of the happy Gods immortal—for of such power is the great-hearted Guardian, Daughter of a Mighty Sire, that holdeth Her hands over us.' 'May Zeus that dwelleth in the sky ever keep his right arm over this city for her safety's sake, and with him the other Blessed Immortals.' <sup>4</sup> The gods share in the experiences of their city, rejoice at and benefit from its successes and prosperity, and suffer under its setbacks. 'Methinks it is our common cause I urge. For a state that prospers pays honours to its gods'—these are the words with which Eteocles at the end of his prayer reminds the gods that it is to their own advantage not less than that of the mortal citizens that Thebes should survive. They too are citizens, and references to the 'gods citizens' are no less legitimate than phrases like the 'city-holding', i. e., city-possessing, or the 'city-saving', city-protecting, gods.<sup>5</sup>

Whoever acted against the interests of the city, acted against her gods, and persons guilty of such offenses were barred from temples and sacrifices. Xerxes, by destroying the temples of Athens, brought upon himself the wrath of the gods, and thereby heightened the confidence of the Athenians, who after this insult felt doubly sure that they could count on the gods' help in the

subsequent stages of the great war. 'Come if thou smite this land,'  
Jocasta addresses Polyneices:

'Fore heaven, how wilt thou set Zeus' trophies up?  
How sacrifice for fatherland o'ercome?  
And how at Inachus' streams inscribe the spoils?—  
'Polyneices hath burnt Thebes, and to the Gods  
Offers these shields'—thus? <sup>6</sup>

War between two cities is at the same time war between their divine protectors. Relationships existing between different cities were reflected in the myths about their gods; and relations between the mythical background of the deities of different cities could at any time be interpreted as political relations between the cities themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The connection between the city and her god or goddess is so close that it is no overstatement to say that they are identical. The deity represents and personifies the city, actually is the city when this is conceived as a religious entity. To understand the nature of this relationship we must bear in mind that the unifying principle of even a small group, a family or *φρατρία*, was their common worship of a god or hero.<sup>8</sup> A young man would be introduced into such a group before the altars of the 'phratria'. Similarly, a larger unit like the *φύλη* was held together by the cult of a hero who was worshiped as the common ancestor. To provide a religious bond and basis for the *φύλαι* was deemed necessary even in sweeping upheavals and attempts at rational reorganization of the citizenry. Cleisthenes' reform is a case in point; no matter how artificial the religious phase of this reorganization may seem to us, for the Greeks the religious unity of a group was highly real, whether it had come about by natural development or by the will of a reformer. Finally, the city too, representing the consummation of Greek communal, social, and political life, has the centre of its existence and solidarity in the worship of its god. It is nowadays assumed that certain cults were transferred from the families or *φρατρίαι* to which they originally belonged to the city as such, and that, while the family kept the privilege of supplying the priestess of such a cult, the city

asserted her supremacy as the unifying factor. Thus Apollo *Patroos* and Zeus *Herkeios*, in addition to being the gods of individual groups, became the divine patrons of the Athenian people as a whole. In similar fashion, Athens, when it absorbed smaller communities like Eleusis and Salamis, adopted their gods and heroes; and while the men of Eleusis became Athenian citizens, the city of Athens henceforth took charge of the cult of the Eleusinian deities. It would even be misleading to speak of this incorporation of the gods of the smaller communities into the Athenian cult as a development parallel to the political incorporation of the community. It is more than a parallel development and more than a symbol. It is the very incorporation itself.<sup>9</sup>

I refer to an instance of interference with established cults on the part of a statesman, but it should be said that the religious phase of Cleisthenes' reform is by no means singular. The popular worship and cults were a matter of grave concern to the ruler; and while it may be too much to say that the tyrants and other political leaders of the sixth century acted on the maxim, *cuius regio eius religio*, cultic and religious institutions could not remain unaffected by changes in the political order. To strengthen one cult and to weaken or discredit another was a part of the political game, because the relative strength or weakness of a cult was an indication of the strength or weakness of a political party, or of the greater or less great intensity of the allegiance to another Greek city. The vigorous support which Pisistratus gave to the cult of Dionysus reflected his policy of ingratiating himself with the rural population of Attica and playing it off against certain sections of the Athenian citizenry. Cleisthenes of Sicyon 'buried' the hero Adrastus in the *τέμενος* of his archfoe Melanippus (whose cult he himself had just established) because Adrastus was an Argive, and Cleisthenes was anxious to efface the vestiges of Argive influence on Sicyon.<sup>10</sup> Other measures of the same kind might be mentioned, but it seems needless to add further instances. All reveal the same spirit, and also the same conditions; but while they may strike us as rather highhanded, we should beware of concluding that the 'tyrants' or other strong-willed individuals of the time were

cynical in religious matters.<sup>11</sup> The truth probably is that they felt as free in forming their religious allegiances as they were in forming political ones. We have no right to suppose that the critical and sceptical movements of the fifth century were anticipated in the sixth.

In the classical Greek city, devotion and observance of duties to the city-protecting deity and loyalty to the city herself are one and the same thing. To doubt the existence of the gods would have been an act of treason against the State, but it was hardly to be feared that a citizen would entertain such doubts; for to do so would have been more than a crime; it would have been an absurdity, since to question the existence of the gods would have been to question the reality of the city-state, the common mother of all the citizens. Conversely, there was no need for the State to inculcate patriotism and a spirit of loyalty in the citizens as long as they were trained to 'honor the gods'. Piety of a non-political character or a purely secular patriotism would have been a contradiction in terms. Both attitudes were the result of the crisis through which the old order of things, the religion of the fathers, was to pass in the second half of the fifth century.

The inhabitants of one city would not question the reality of another's protecting deity, though they would hope that their own deity was stronger and gave more effective protection. The outstanding gods were, in any case, Panhellenic, and the general recognition of the 'Homeric' gods strengthened the consciousness of a common nationality. Cities which worshiped the same god organized themselves into leagues or amphictyonies which had their centre in this particular cult. The Greek cities also participated in the great national festivals and games which were celebrated in honor of Zeus and other gods. Athens sent official representatives to these games as well as regular *θεωρίαι* to Delos and Delphi. Another feature which is typical of the city-religion, and yet in a way transcends it, is the recognition of 'national' oracles like that in Delphi, which was frequently consulted.<sup>12</sup> But these Panhellenic aspects of the official religion are not entirely relevant to our particular purpose, and we

must here content ourselves with this short reference to them.

Worship of the city goddess pervades all phases of the political life of classical Athens.<sup>13</sup> Athena was felt to be present in every enterprise or activity of the city, her favor and aid were sought on every occasion of importance, and it was the primary concern of the State that the gods receive their due in sacrifices, processions, feasts, and the like. When the monarchy was abolished, the religious functions which had been performed by the king could neither be abandoned nor assigned to lesser officials; thus Athens retained among her archons a king-archon to carry on the functions which only a king was entitled to perform. But religious duties loomed large also among the functions of other archons, notably the first archon and the polemarch. We need not enumerate all those other officials, some of whom were appointed by the archons, some elected by the citizens, to take charge of regularly performed or recurrent religious ceremonies. Those who are mentioned in Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens* would alone make an impressive list.<sup>14</sup> They include the χορηγοί of the Dionysian festivals and the commissioners of games (ἀθλοθέται) who among other things 'manage the Panathenaic procession, the contest in music and that in gymnastic and the horse-race', and also 'provide the peplos of Athena'. Finally, there are the priests or priestesses and numerous other officials in charge of the temples, who were responsible to the community, and whose conduct of office we find regulated by decrees (preserved on stones) which not infrequently allude to the minutest details.<sup>15</sup> From the major officials the Assembly received reports about sacrifices performed, and money spent in the service of the gods, and it was an established practice to reserve the first place on the agenda of the assemblies for such reports or for other business concerning 'things sacred'. Demosthenes in one of his *Philippics* <sup>16</sup> suggests that the plight of Athens would be much less dangerous if necessary military operations were prepared and conducted with the same promptness as festivals. Expenses for the official cults, and for religious festivals must, in spite of the λειτουργίαι performed by individual citizens, have formed a large item in the Athenian budget, but we should bear

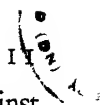


in mind that the money which the city had to spend was in any case the money of the goddess. Athena was not only the sole or principal owner of the public funds, from whom the State itself would borrow in times of stress, but also held a greater amount of real estate than anyone else in Attica; and it is by no means impossible that Plato, who makes the city gods the owners of the whole area of his State, is only reviving what had once been a common practice.

There can be no doubt that religious festivals were prepared with the utmost care, and celebrated with the most scrupulous attention to every detail of the traditional rites. The chief festivals like the Panathenaia, whose very name is reminiscent of the political integration of Attica under the aegis of the goddess, must have been a source of pride and elation for the whole populace; and the regular recurrence of these feasts with their processions, contests, and other ceremonies gave a certain rhythm and pattern to the life of every citizen. By celebrating these feasts the city asserted, and gave visible expression to, the consciousness of a close bond between it and the goddess who directed its destinies. Great learning and ingenuity have been employed by modern scholars to explain the rites and cult-practices which formed part of these festivals.<sup>17</sup> The study unquestionably has helped us on towards a better understanding of the original religious meaning of these acts of the cult. Yet it is probably safe to say that in the great days of Athens this original meaning had been obliterated; few citizens if any were aware of it, but a new value had accrued to these feasts through their significance as symbols of Athens' unity, pride, and political greatness, and of the power of the Empire; for the Empire too was Athena's Empire; it was in her temple on the Acropolis that the financial contributions of the 'allies' were kept.<sup>18</sup>

'When the inhabitants of Attica formed a unified state, they indicated by the very name they chose that they were unified as Athena's people. On the other hand, the goddess whose name they adopted absorbed into her own character not a few traits of the people so as to become the very soul of Athens.' Wilamo-

## Religion in the City-State



witz<sup>19</sup> writes thus, but still in the same context protests against what he calls the 'modern misunderstanding'—the notion that Athena received her name from Athens. How the character of Athena changed by adapting itself to that of her people has, so far as I know, never been shown in detail; nor would this be an easy task. We may venture to suggest that for Athenian feeling the goddess represented the same combination of fighting spirit and forethought, balanced wisdom and bravery, which the Athenians would claim as their own distinctive traits. It is even possible that when the citizens of Athens developed an imperialistic mind and treated their allies of the 'League' harshly, the goddess too adopted an imperialistic outlook, while when the citizens thought in terms of 'Justice' the goddess' character symbolized this idea to them. In Aeschylus' *Eumenides* Athena founds the highest and most venerable court of Athens. Representing as she does a higher level of civilization, and a distinctly political outlook, she puts Justice and juridical procedure in the place once occupied by blood-vengeance and a primitive concept of retribution; though, as we learn in the same play, it is essential to this 'Justice' that the past order is incorporated in the new dispensation: 'I will appoint judges of homicide bound by oath and establish a tribunal, a tribunal to endure for all time. . . . And ye shall possess a bulwark to safeguard your country and your government, such as none of mankind hath.'<sup>20</sup> Aeschylus in this play takes a profounder view than elsewhere of the mutual allegiance between the city and its protecting deity: Athena provides for her city a firm ethical bulwark (*ἐρμῆς*). This bulwark is, generally considered, the citizens' devotion to Justice, and their determination to pass just verdicts; more precisely defined, it is their respect for a legal procedure which is sanctioned by the gods, and for the oaths sworn, in court, in their name. We may say, it is fear of the gods.<sup>21</sup> Like Athena, other gods too, and not least Zeus himself, have come to stand for the idea of Justice. In general, the Greek gods have become more responsible and less arbitrary than they used to be, in Homer, for example; and this change is certainly in a large meas-

ure the result of their becoming 'citizens'. Finally, it is hardly possible that the artistic and intellectual flowering of a city like Athens should not have left its mark on the character of its goddess and of the gods in general.

We must bear in mind that these same gods confronted the citizens of Athens in numerous statuary, pictorial, and poetic representations, and that they would on many occasions impress their type and ethical dignity, their σοφία and σωφροσύνη, upon the minds of the young, thus contributing in an essential way to the education of the citizens—the same citizens (or the children of the same citizens) who had created their idea and 'type'. For both the gods and the heroes of the mythical and epic tradition were παραδείγματα ἀρετῆς for the Greeks long before Plato recognized that this was their traditional function and wondered whether the gods and heroes, as Homer had fashioned them, were really fit to serve as παραδείγματα for the young.<sup>22</sup>

The Athenians did not forget that they owed their victories over the Persians to their divine protectors. Nor did they, in the following decades, fail to cultivate and reaffirm their loyalty and devotion to the goddess, the *Polias* and *Promachos*, who watched over the safety and stability of city and empire alike. Under the direction of Pericles, the Acropolis was adorned with magnificent new buildings. The resources of the State were generously employed to make the new home of the goddess worthy of her own greatness and of the great empire united under her auspices. Whether it is necessary to assume that 'she and the other protecting gods should seem to the individual citizen somewhat more removed from human interests and sympathy as they gained in the august majesty which the wealth of the empire lent them'<sup>23</sup> may be a matter for controversy. It is certainly true, as we shall see in the next chapter, that relations between the individual and the gods were deeply disturbed by the same crisis that destroyed the old relations between the individual and the State. In this chapter we have tried to describe, in a rather summary fashion, conditions as they existed before the crisis. We have done so in the belief that an awareness of these conditions is essential to a just understanding of Plato's approach and aims.

## NOTES

1 Martin P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (tr. by F. J. Fielden, Oxford, 1925), pp. 224-62. Nilsson suggests (pp. 232 ff.) that the heroes played an even more important part in the political life of the Greek cities than did the gods. I do not deny that the heroes were in some ways very important, but the authority of the gods is nevertheless unique, and it is certainly noteworthy that the criticism and the sceptical arguments which at the end of the fifth century threatened to destroy the religious foundation of the *Polis* (see Chapter II) were directed against the gods, whereas the position and reality of the heroes seem never to have become a serious problem.

2 Homer, *Il.* 6. 86-98, 297-311.

3 Aeschylus, *Sept.* 97 ff. (tr. by H. W. Smyth, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1922-26); Herod. 8, 41.

4 Solon, *Frag.* 4; Theognis 757 ff. in J. M. Edmond, *Elegy and Iambus* (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1931), vol. 1.

5 Aesch., *Sept.* 76 f. (cf. Euripides, *Frag.* 360. 46-9). *Θεοὶ πολῖται*: *Sept.* 253; *πολιῶχοι* (and similar forms): *ibid.* 69, 109, 185, 271, 312, 822; *Agam.* 338; Aristophanes, *Eq.* 581; *Θεοὶ ἀστυνάκτες καὶ πολιῶχοι*: Aesch., *Suppl.* 1018 ff.; *γὰς τὰςδε πυργοφύλακες*: *Sept.* 168; cf. *Eumen.* 918-20.

6 Herodotus 8. 143-4; Eurip., *Phoen.* 571-7 (tr. by A. S. Way, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1916-19).

7 Besides the older works of N. D. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique* (14th ed., Paris, 1893); W. Warde Fowler, *The City State of the Greeks and Romans* (London, 1893); and Jacob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1898-1902) 1. 84, cf. the works cited below in Notes 9 and 13, and also L. R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (London, 1922), pp. 48-91; and *Outline-History of Greek Religion* (London, 1921), pp. 64-74.

8 Cf. F. E. Adcock in *Cambr. Anc. Hist.* 3. 688, 697 and W. R. Halliday, *ibid.* 2. 639. See also Helmut Berve, *Griechische Geschichte* (Freiburg, 1930-34) 1. 90 f., 176 f., 201 ff.

9 See especially Severin Solders, *Die ausserstädtischen Kulte und die Einigung Attikas* (diss., Lund, 1931) and M. P. Nilsson's comments on a recently found inscription, in *A. J. P.* 59 (1938). 385-93. The inscription has been published by W. S. Ferguson in *Hesperia* 7 (1938). 1-74. See further Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, pp. 240 ff. and Sam Wide in A. Gerke and E. Norden, *Einleitung in die Altertumswissenschaft* (Leipzig, 1910) 2. 227, 255.

10 For Cleisthenes of Sicyon cf. Herod. 5. 67 f., and for an interpretation see H. T. Wade Gary in *Cambr. Anc. Hist.* 3. 550. For Pisistratus cf. F. E. Adcock, *Cambr. Anc. Hist.* 4. 67. See also P. N. Ure, *The Origin of Tyranny* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 305, on the religious policy of Periander.

11 If there is truth in the story that Pisistratus was led back to Athens by Phye dressed up as Athena, this statement would need qualification; but I am reluctant to believe that this episode (Herod. 1. 60) really took place. Still it is noteworthy that the story could be told and that it was credited. See the latest discussion of it by H. J. Rose in *Class. Quart.* 34 (1940). 81.

12 For *Θεωπλαί* cf. Ludwig Ziehen, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Zweite Reihe* 5. 2228-33. On amphictyonies see Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* (2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1908-) 3. 326 ff. On the Delphic Oracle see H. W. Parke, *A History of the Delphic Oracle* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 47-214. Cf. Chapter VIII, Note 4.

13 Cf. Georg Busolt and Heinrich Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, pp.

514-27, 1168-76 in Iwan Müller, *Handbuch der Klass. Altertumswissenschaft* 4. 1 (3rd ed., München, 1920-26).

14 See in particular ch. 60, and for the religious duties of the ἀρχων, the βασιλεύς, and the πολέμαρχος chs. 56-8.

15 See *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, ed. by Joannes de Prott and Ludovicus Ziehen (Leipzig, 1896-1906), especially the *leges publicae* of Athens, 2. 1-116.

16 Demosthenes 4. 35 f.

17 Cf. Ludwig Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932).

18 The cities of the League were obliged to send contributions to the Panathenaeans and the Greater Dionysia. They were also urged, or compelled, to send gifts of their 'first fruits' to Eleusis. See M. N. Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1933), nos. 29, 44, 74. I am indebted for this reference to Professor M. L. W. Laistner; see also his *History of the Greek World from 479 to 323 B. C.* (London, 1936), pp. 465 ff.

19 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*, p. 52 in Paul Hinneberg, *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* 4. 1 (2nd ed., Berlin, 1922).

20 Aesch., *Eum.* 486 ff., 701 ff.

21 Aeschylus himself suggests that 'fear' (τὸ δεινόν) cannot be dispensed with (698). The time was not yet come to conceive of a morality without fear. Plato in *Rep.* 2 renounces this and other extrinsic safeguards.

22 See Chapter IV.

23 C. H. Moore, *The Religious Thought of the Greeks from Homer to the Triumph of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1916), p. 112. This book should be compared throughout in relation to this chapter and the next. Cf. also Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York, 1940), p. 87.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD RELIGION

THE Greek city, sure of the wholehearted devotion of its citizens and supported by the full authority of the divine powers whom it had attached to itself, may well convey the impression of an impregnable fortress, but in the second half of the fifth century cracks and breaks begin to appear in its ideological bulwarks. The religion of the city-state could continue unquestioned as long as there was no doubt that the morality of the gods completely corresponded to the official morality of the city and as long as the individual citizen's morality fell in with it as well. The question is: how long could this situation last?

In Sophocles' *Antigone* Creon ridicules the suggestion that the gods should have taken care of Polyneices' dead body to save him from the ignominy which Creon had meant to inflict on him. What should have prompted the gods to interfere on behalf of a man who led his army against their city and who, had he been victorious, would have destroyed their temples? He is sure that the gods, if they were at all active during the crisis, could be so only on behalf of the defenders of Thebes: 'Thou sayest what is not to be borne, . . . that the gods have care for this corpse. . . . [He] came to burn their pillared shrines and sacred treasures, to burn their land, and scatter its laws to the wind. Or dost thou behold the gods honouring the wicked?'<sup>1</sup> But when, a little later, Antigone is caught in the act of burying her brother and is asked by Creon how she could presume to set his decree at naught, she too claims to have the gods on her side. She knows of laws different from those which he has issued and, we may add, of gods who (even though their names might be identical with those invoked by Creon) are less exclusively

tied to the city and its interests. She sets a broader conception of the divine powers against his narrow and, one may say, orthodox view: 'It was not Zeus that had published me that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the Justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of to-day or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth. Not through dread of any human pride could I answer to the gods for breaking these.' <sup>2</sup>

We should, however, be very rash if we regarded a religious feeling of this kind and a mentality that gropes for a concept of God outside the sphere of political life as typical. So firm a belief in divine laws and 'statutes' (*νόμματα*) overriding those of the political authorities may well have been something exceptional. Less exceptional is the general human attitude which in this context happens to find support in Zeus's unwritten laws and which in other instances may have derived confidence from other sources. In the last analysis, this confidence rests on the individual's knowledge, in his own heart, of the standards and norms which he must follow in order to remain true to himself. The rebellion of the individual against the political order is more important and in all probability more typical than the specific appeal to Zeus's unwritten laws. The decisive fact is that the individual has values and interests of his own private life to safeguard. A human existence outside the orbit of the state and at variance with its policy and a concept of private happiness are taking shape. All the major characters in Sophocles' plays are aware of certain definite values which make their lives worth living. These values vary from play to play and from character to character. They are normally not of the material order, but immaterial possessions, titles, claims, standing, and reputation; they are the things which give meaning, substance, and dignity to the lives of *ἀγαθαὶ φύσεις*, noble, high-minded natures. Ajax kills himself when his name and honor are disgraced. Oedipus' much admired and much envied happiness suffers complete eclipse when the truth about his relationship to his predecessor,

his wife, and his children comes to light. Deianeira's life is destroyed when she loses the sole possession of Heracles' love. We need not exhaust the subject, but we should realize that all these characters put up a struggle—and a most intense one—for the preservation of these 'goods' of their life, since they feel that their very existence (not necessarily and always their physical existence, but their existence as noble natures living by their own standards) depends upon the presence of these 'goods'.

The intrinsic goodness and 'nobility' of these Sophoclean characters<sup>3</sup> keep their desires and efforts within definite limits. They never desire what is positively bad and immoral. The high-minded personality sets up new standards and values; it does not trample standards underfoot. 'May deeds of wicked daring be ever far from my thoughts, . . . as I abhor the women who attempt them' says Deianeira at the very moment at which she embarks on her little scheme.<sup>4</sup> But the individual has emancipated himself and is determined to consider himself the sole judge of what is essential for his happiness. He will not long confine himself to those, somehow legitimate, aspirations which are typical of Sophocles' characters.

Euripides shows whither developments were heading: 'deeds of wicked daring' are no longer abhorred. Euripides' characters no longer know the restraint which springs from an inborn sense of what is noble and truly valuable and from a natural abhorrence for what is base and ignoble. They feel free to satisfy any desires, no matter how objectionable, and when provoked they are unscrupulous in the choice of the weapons which they employ for their revenge. The schemes for vengeance of Medea, Phaedra, and Hecuba illustrate this second stage in the history of the emancipation of the individual. Instead of recognizing the objective and conventional standards sanctioned by the community to which they belong, the characters of Sophocles' and Euripides' tragedies follow the desires and demands of their own 'nature' (*φύσις*). The standards are set at naught, ignored, questioned and in the end come to be regarded as mere 'conventions'. But while Sophocles viewed human 'nature' as essentially noble and as capable of setting up norms even higher and more exact-



ing than those generally recognized, Euripides conceived it as ruthless and lawless, guided by no objective norm, at the mercy of passions, devoid of reason.<sup>5</sup> Thus in his plays a brutal, merciless type of individual emerges. And while the relation between Sophocles and the spirit of his age is a somewhat difficult problem, we may confidently assume that Euripides draws to a large extent on the life and mentality of his time and reflects tendencies which became increasingly characteristic of contemporary Athens.

Confronted with this new brand of self-assured individualism, the city-state could hardly expect to remain an object of pious reverence or to continue as a sacrosanct entity placed once for all outside the reach of criticism and destructive speculation. It seems to be the better-founded view that the growth of individualism led to the development of a critical attitude towards the traditional form of the state and the traditional type of religion than that such criticism came first and prepared the ground for the heightening of individual self-consciousness.

The revolutionary speculations which Euripides puts into the mouths of his characters give us an impression of the searching criticism to which the existing political structure and the conventional ideals of the Athenian city-state were subjected during this period, and Antiphon's *Truth* and the little that we know of the theories of the 'Sophists' may serve to round off the picture. The teachings of the Sophists must have varied considerably. While from some of them an Athenian youth would receive only a more or less systematic instruction in everything conducive to good citizenship, he would in listening to others imbibe advanced doctrines to the effect that all human beings were equal, that distinctions based on class, wealth, or sex were as artificial as national or racial barriers, that the 'justice' represented by the laws of his city was a sham justice, and that 'nature' was the only source of norms for human conduct.<sup>6</sup> There may have been others who went even a step farther by interpreting the 'law of nature' (τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον) as implying that the stronger was always right and ought to have his way and that it was contrary to 'nature' to show either respect or mercy for

the weaker. We know this radical doctrine of the 'will to power' from Plato's *Gorgias* where it is defended by Callicles, but we cannot be certain that it was also taught by any of the outstanding Sophists.<sup>7</sup>

Laws, moral standards, and education in the spirit of the laws and the moral tradition had been supported by the authority of the city-state; they were the means by which the spirit behind its political, cultural, and cultic institutions perpetuated itself. The guardians of these institutions and representatives of this spirit were the gods, who had also become identified with the morality which the city fostered. Thus as soon as this morality ceased to be regarded as the only way of living for an Athenian citizen, the gods too came in for critical scrutiny. To attack and discredit conventional morality itself was not too difficult a task since it could easily be shown that he who adhered to it found himself constantly at a disadvantage against him who cast it to the winds. But what about the gods whose time-honored authority still produced some lingering doubts in the minds of many Athenians whether the disregard of fundamental ethical rules did not provoke the wrath of beings powerful enough to wreak vengeance?<sup>8</sup> These doubts and scruples proved baseless when, on closer examination, the records of the gods were found to be of such a kind as to offer many handles to the opponents of conventional morality but little comfort to its defenders. A god's record consists in the myths associated with his name, and these myths had taken shape in an era prior to the consolidation of the city-state. There can be no doubt that the great Attic poets, far from countenancing all the traditional mythical tales and stories which clustered around the divine figures, had done a great deal to purify and exalt the conceptions of divine activities and manifestations.<sup>9</sup> But they had not destroyed their former record altogether. The older myths had never become perfectly obsolete, and indeed it would be very difficult to imagine how they could have been put out of currency once for all and *en bloc*. The old epic poems were still read, recited, and listened to. If contemporary poets like the dramatists considered themselves free to refashion the older and cruder myths in which

the gods did not live up to their moral ideals, another generation, if it felt but slightly more critical, could proceed to express its dissatisfaction openly. There was clearly an alternative to the practice of partly ignoring, partly revising the less reputable phases in the record of the Olympian deities. By focusing attention on these very phases and by refusing to continue the process of refashioning them, it was possible to discredit the gods altogether.

If we were in a position to read all the passages in Euripides' plays in which he allows his characters, men and women, to inveigh against the gods, we might coördinate them into a system, or something approximating a system, of the ethical views which advanced minds held in Athens a generation or two before ethics actually became a subject of study.

While Heracles is absent his wife and children have fallen into the hands of the new tyrant of Thebes. Amphytryon, Heracles' stepfather, defies the tyrant's threat, shields the woman and the children, and faces the danger of death with them. Yet Zeus, Heracles' father, makes no effort to assist his progeny and to all appearance is completely indifferent to their sufferings. Amphytryon himself dwells on the contrast between his own courage and loyalty and Zeus's betrayal:

Zeus, for my couch-mate gained I thee in vain,  
 Named thee in vain co-father of my son.  
 Less than thou seemedst art thou friend to us!  
 Mortal, in worth [*ἀρετή*] thy godhead I outdo:  
 Hercules' sons have I abandoned not.  
 Cunning wast thou to steal unto my couch,—  
 To filch another's right none tendered thee,—  
 Yet know'st not how to save thy dear ones now!  
 Thine is unwisdom, or injustice thine.<sup>10</sup>

Amphytryon stresses the fact that he is a 'mortal'. His point is that the conduct of the highest god is ethically inferior to that of a human being in the same situation. It is remarkable to what length criticism could go. Adultery is already mentioned in

Xenophanes as one of the items which 'bring dishonor amongst mortals' but which Homer and Hesiod have not hesitated to impute to the gods.

The abandonment and betrayal of seduced women, of children, kinsfolk, and other individuals for whom they should feel responsible, may be the charge most frequently brought against the gods in these plays. It is characterized not so much as a lack of basic human feelings (obviously, nothing like family attachment would even be expected of the gods), but as a failure to meet obligations. Zeus, Amphytrion argues, has no sense of justice.

In *Ion*, Creusa and some other characters are led to suppose that Apollo, after ravishing her, has turned away from her and the child that she has borne. He has been callous enough to let the child perish where it was exposed. The assumption is exploded by developments at the end of the play, but this fact in no way lessens the force of the invective and the bitterness of the accusations against Apollo. In the context in which we read them no knowledge of either the background or subsequent development can impair the sting of these comments. Ion, still ignorant of his own identity bursts out:

Yet must I plead  
With Phoebus—what ails him? He ravisheth  
Maids, and forsakes; begetteth babes by stealth,  
And heeds not, though they die. Do thou not so!  
Being strong, be righteous. For what man so'er  
Transgresseth, the Gods visit this on him.  
How were it just then that ye should enact  
For men laws, and yourselves work lawlessness?  
For if—it could not be, yet put it so—  
Ye should pay mulct to men for lawless lust,  
Thou, the Sea-king, and Zeus the Lord of Heaven,  
Paying for wrongs should make your temples void.  
For, following pleasure past all wisdom's bounds,  
Ye work unrighteousness. Unjust it were  
To call men vile, if we but imitate  
What Gods deem good:—they are vile who teach us this.<sup>11</sup>

## The Background

This passage is especially interesting for us because Ion reminds the gods that they gave the laws to mortals. The Greeks liked to put it this way and to some extent actually believed so even though they knew the historical circumstances under which the law had been introduced. Thus Ion can argue that the gods champion certain definite moral norms for human beings and yet violate the same norms of conduct in their own actions.

Immorality of a somewhat different kind is the charge brought against Apollo in *Andromache*. He is said to have acted after the manner of a 'wicked man', i. e., a wicked human being, because he has retained a grudge against a mortal who had offended him at a time rather distant and who, moreover, now has approached him intending to make up for this offense:

Thus he that giveth oracles to the world,  
He that is judge to all men of the right,  
Hath wreaked revenge upon Achilles' son,—  
Yea, hath remembered, like some evil man,  
An old, old feud! How then, shall he be wise? <sup>12</sup>

Thus Apollo too falls short of the ideal of justice.

In *Auge* Euripides went even a step farther. For the goddess who is being taken to task in this play is Athena, holiest and most revered of all gods and goddesses to the loyal Athenian citizens. We know of the episode in question only through a later writer who cites two lines from it. Auge, having given birth to a child in Athena's temple, anticipates (or maybe actually experiences) the wrath of the goddess and protests in exasperated language against the rules of outward purity which the goddess wishes to see observed in her temple. The same goddess, she charges, rejoices in trophies brought home from bloody wars.<sup>13</sup> Auge's complaints are, as far as we can make out, that Athena's standard of purity is narrow, inhuman, and unjust, that she herself does not conform to it, and that she treats mortals with unreasonable harshness. Whether Euripides too characterized these standards as extrinsic and artificial is more than we can say. But he certainly champions a refined concept of purity on the basis of which murder, bloody sacrifices, and every kind of bloodshed

would be branded unworthy of divine beings. Enlightened views of this kind are put forward by Iphigenia, whose office as priestess of Artemis imposes on her the duty of offering human sacrifices to the goddess.<sup>14</sup>

Note that in none of these passages is it argued that if the gods fail to conform to moral standards these standards may be false. In every instance the discrepancy is used as an indictment against the gods, not against the standards. To be sure, these standards are often enough treated with contempt by Euripides' characters; but when it comes to a criticism of the gods they are nevertheless applied, and the discrepancy which his criticism brings to light is that between an absolute, normative 'ethics' and the questionable morality of the myths. We feel that even he who believes in 'ethics' would do better to renounce the questionable support of religion. In fact, Phaedra and Heracles are both urged not to be too much affected by the appalling moral aspect of the actions which they have committed or are about to commit;<sup>15</sup> for, it is pointed out to them, actions of the kind are not foreign even to the Olympians, and yet they have not destroyed their happiness. Thus the gods have become nothing less than examples of immorality. It is possible to read whole plays like *Hippolytus* and *Heracles*, and also later ones like *Electra* and *Orestes*, as emphatic and sustained denunciations of divine unscrupulousness, callousness, and folly. And it was Euripides who said: 'If the gods do anything base they are no gods.'

The gods whose record is open to so much criticism also fail to mete out rewards and punishments to individuals in accordance with their deserts. To this opinion too people might have been led by scrutiny of the myths, but it is more likely to have sprung from observation of ordinary, contemporary human experience. When it came, it dealt a severe blow to confidence in divine justice. Justice (*δίκη*) had more and more come to be regarded as the fundamental ethical and political value that was realized in the democratic organization of the city-state. Simultaneously, in a parallel development, the old conceptions of the gods had been transformed in such manner that Justice emerged

as the distinguishing trait of the city-protecting deities. Aeschylus, who did so much to awaken the Greeks to a profounder conception of deity, is not in the least anxious that Zeus be thought of as courageous, beautiful, or temperate; he throws his whole thought into the problem of Zeus's justice, and if anything besides his justice mattered it would be his power to enforce it.<sup>16</sup>

Naturally, the conviction that the gods stood for the same principle that was realized in the city-state had made it easier to identify them with the city. We have studied this process in the first chapter. On the other hand, common human experience would always present abundant evidence against the notion of a divine Providence and Justice. That some people lived in undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their unscrupulous and unmitigated wickedness, whereas others in spite of their excellent moral record were afflicted with poverty, sickness, disgrace, or bereavements, could of course be observed at any time. The question was only whether impressions of this kind (no matter how obvious and abundant) could impair confidence in divine justice and the rule of the gods or whether the inherited confidence was strong enough to discredit any facts that might seem to tell against it. With the generations between Solon and Sophocles the preconceived religious idea seems to have been stronger, though even with them it may not have gone entirely unquestioned. It is difficult to say whether the objections which poets like Aeschylus seem to forestall ('It hath been said by some one that the gods deign not to be mindful of mortals who trample underfoot the grace of inviolable sanctities.'<sup>17</sup>) were actually raised. The fact is that these intellectual leaders were able to vindicate divine Justice in the face of obvious empirical injustice: *δίκη* 'did come completely'; if the guilty individual himself escapes her she will lay hold of his descendants.<sup>18</sup> These poets taught that the perspective had to be widened; a single human life does not suffice to show actions and experiences in a morally satisfactory relation to one another. Aeschylus agrees with Solon that Zeus's Justice never fails to assert itself<sup>19</sup> in the end though, if we compare their outlook, we realize that in Aeschylus the idea of a just retribution and a divine world-order is bristling

with new and involved problems worthy of the most concentrated intellectual effort of the profoundest thinker among the tragedians. On the whole, his plays lend countenance to the belief that Dike works slowly and needs 'time' to come into her own, and that to look for her on the surface of things or expect her to triumph within the short spell of an individual human life is to be disappointed. His trilogies reveal the slow but certain emergence of Justice, while the chorus points out that the ways of Zeus, who makes her triumph, are hidden from human minds.

The Greeks used the same phrase (εὖ πράττειν) for 'acting well' and 'doing well', and found it difficult to abandon belief in an intimate and causal connection between the two concepts. But by the time of Euripides they were prepared to admit a *non sequitur*. They were less prone to dispute away the evidence of flourishing wickedness and suffering probity; and advanced people in Athens had, it seems, lost patience with the subtle philosophy that urged them to take a long-range view of things and to expect satisfaction of their sense of justice in due time. The story of Diagoras, the first 'atheist' (or one of the first), who turned his back on religion when he saw that people who indulged in perjury were not punished by the gods, is a good story—even if its value is symbolical rather than historical.<sup>20</sup> So too runs the argument in Euripides' *Bellerophon*:

Does any say that there are gods in heaven? No! there are none, if a man will not be fool enough to credit the old tale. Let not my words guide your judgment; see for yourselves. I say that tyranny slays its thousands and despoils their goods, and men who break their oath cause cities to be sacked; and, doing so, they are happier than men who walk quietly in the ways of piety from day to day. And I know of small states, where the gods are honoured, that are overmastered in battle by numbers and become subject to greater states that are far less god-fearing.<sup>21</sup>

It is not by accident that this bold atheist draws his best argument from the tyrant's mode of procedure. For, we know, not only did the idea of tyrannical power fascinate the imagination



of Euripides' contemporaries who looked at it with feelings mixed of envy, hatred, and fear, but tyranny clearly offered the most glaring example of an unmitigated and unscrupulous contempt of every standard of justice, decency, and humanity. And yet there was no denying that it paid. Did it not furnish the successful villain (that is to say, the villain who was consistent enough to stop at no crime and no act of brutality) with everything that was commonly regarded as an ingredient of happiness? 'I need not go far or appeal to antiquity; events which have happened only a few days ago are enough . . . to prove that many men who do wrong are happy.' So says Polus in Plato's *Gorgias*, and goes on to discuss the record of the 'tyrant' Archelaus of Macedonia who secured his throne by a succession of crimes. Polus is utterly at a loss to understand how Socrates can disagree with him about Archelaus' happiness. The problem of the tyrant's happiness was acute and important enough for Plato to tackle it not only in the *Gorgias* but also in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, not to mention such short and casual references as are found in still other works of his.<sup>22</sup> The discrepancy between the moral record and the record of achievements was too drastic, the disappointment of those who looked for just retribution too vivid to be allayed by speculations about the possibility of a reversal in the future.

Let us note that from the lack of a just distribution of happiness and misfortune amongst human beings the 'atheist' in this passage infers at once the non-existence of the gods. If there is no divine Providence, there are no gods. No consideration is given to the possibility that the gods might have any task or function other than the meting out of their deserts to human beings. To such extent had the just and equitable administration of human affairs come to be regarded as their *raison d'être*. It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to assume that for an Athenian at the end of the fifth century this was the only possible view of the gods.

Failure to administer the world and men's lives in a spirit of justice reflects unfavorably either on the gods' morality or on their power. It may be a matter of callous indifference on their

part; and if this is the case, the argument becomes similar in character and intent to the other type of indictment which, as we have seen, was drawn from their mythological background. A note of 'in vain' enters into man's approach to them. 'In vain we sacrificed!' says Hecuba in *The Trojan Women*; and elsewhere in the same play she interrupts her invocation of the gods with 'O Gods!—to sorry helpers I appeal,' and goes on to say that it is a 'form' or convention to turn to them in misfortune.<sup>23</sup> The knowledge that they are in vain takes the confidence out of man's prayers. Rational computation of the chances of survival or success is wiser than the expectation that the gods will help him who fights for the better cause; this is one of the lessons set forth in Thucydides' famous dialogue by the Athenians to the Melians, who make a futile attempt at dissuading them from a course of action which is a flagrant violation of law.<sup>24</sup>

The question whether there is a divine justice and whether or not it governs human affairs and experiences must have been much discussed in Athens at the time of Euripides. It was even possible to argue that Justice actually directed the course of human life but that this was in no way the result of divine activity: 'Do you think that deeds of wrong fly up on wings to heaven, and then someone writes them on the tablets of Zeus, who looks upon the record and gives judgment upon men? Why, the whole heaven would not suffice for Zeus to write man's sins thereon, nor Zeus himself to consider them and send a punishment for each. No; Justice is here, close at hand, if you will but see it.'<sup>25</sup> This is but another of the many echoes of contemporary discussion that we find in Euripides (the passage is from a lost play). Here it is not denied that Justice is powerful. Nor is the existence of the gods questioned, even though what the speaker thinks of them remains obscure. If they exist they have certainly been relieved of the task of maintaining a just balance between man's actions and experiences. The argument against the assumption of their justice is that so immense a task would exceed their power. Evidently, the speaker cannot bring himself to believe in the vast extent and unlimited nature of their power which Aeschylus had asserted.

Once men realize that the gods do not bother to reward the good and punish the wicked, they will be even less anxious to practise 'virtue' and keep away from 'vice'. It was left for Plato (or, possibly, Socrates) to assert that ἀρετή should be practised for her own sake regardless of the outcome (τὰ συμβαλόντα); but Plato was aware that the majority of men are much more concerned about the outcome than about the ethical habit as such. He realized that belief in divine Justice was a powerful incentive towards ἀρετή and that it made a great difference whether this belief stood unshaken or was undermined by advanced teachings. Plato also discusses the notion (which may have been held by not a few) that initiation into a religious mystery serves as a safeguard against the wrath of the gods. Since such an initiation allays all fear of divine punishment after death, it makes people indifferent to the obligation of ethical conduct. There must even have been men, according to Plato, who made it a trade to secure forgiveness from the gods for any crime and who for a suitable fee would through prayers, sacrifices, or magical practices procure indemnity for anyone who, stung by conscience, had reasons for fearing punishment. Summing up, Plato distinguishes three doctrines, each of which encourages men to commit acts of wickedness: (1) that there are no gods, (2) that the gods are not interested in human affairs, (3) that the gods can be bribed and their wrath bought off.<sup>28</sup>

Still another aspect of the traditional religion proved open to attack. By becoming incorporated in, and identified with, the city-state, the gods had by no means lost their status in the Cosmos. That Zeus 'rains', sends lightning and thunder, and that the heavenly bodies and the phenomena of nature are the manifestations of divine powers, these were probably the general belief up to the advent of the new science. It is possible that in the heyday of the Athenian city-state the presence of the gods was more acutely felt in the political sphere and that their political was more important than their cosmic role in Athenian religion. But there is no need for thinking that the twofold status of the gods, who were at the same time political-ethical and physical powers, presented a problem. After all, why should it? Greek

religion never was dogmatic in character; nor had it ever been reduced to such a closely knit system that a need should have been felt to define precisely the relation between a god's political and his cosmic function. But because the gods were powers of nature, their position became vulnerable as soon as speculation offered alternative explanations of the physical world and the processes and events in it. Even more important than the fact that such explanations were put forward was the other, that their proponents or popularizers were able to convert sections of the *intelligentsia* in Athens (and probably elsewhere) to the new point of view.

By the middle and in the latter half of the fifth century, physical and philosophical systems had emerged which, though in conception neither materialistic nor atheistic, did yet embody propositions which were at variance with the traditional and official religion of the cities. These systems were the works of colonial thinkers. But whether or not their authors spent a part of their lives in Athens, the new ideas were sure to reach the cultural and intellectual metropolis of Greece. The impact of the scientific systems of men like Anaxagoras of Clazomenae and Diogenes of Apollonia must have been powerful. To be sure, thinkers who discussed—among other things—the behavior or the origin of material elements and qualities (like hot and cold, dry and moist) did not intend to divest the universe of gods. On the contrary, just like the older schools, they were anxious to re-establish the gods as principles and powers directing cosmic processes and to redefine their nature.<sup>27</sup> Still in a system like that of Anaxagoras, the divine Mind that ordered all things remained for practical purposes somewhat on the circumference of the system, and the actual responsibility for what happened in the realm of nature lay with material entities, whose behavior he described more fully. Also, these entities operated by rather mechanical laws which in themselves would hardly suggest a spiritual power in control of the whole. Thus it happened for the first time in the history of thought that materialism seemed to dethrone religion. Anaxagoras declared the sun to be a stone and described the moon as a mass of earth; in fact heaven was

'full of stones'. If this was the truth and if everything that happened to these bodies had perfectly intelligible 'natural' causes, they ceased to be divine and were no longer fit to serve as instruments or abodes for the divine powers.

We may infer from Aristophanes' *Clouds* that whoever had become imbued with the 'scientific' theories which weakened the authority of the gods in one realm supposedly under their control, would feel a general lessening of his respect for them. Obviously their rule in the Cosmos and their status as moral powers lent support to one another; and if belief in the former was undermined, the effect would be felt on the other side as well. And hence to teach the new science was considered part of the same mentality that helped the 'unjust argument' to succeed in debate or before the jury, perverted man's sense of justice, destroyed the respect of children for their parents (when Strepsiadēs realizes this he repents of his flirtation with science and atheism and ruefully returns to the old gods), and bred a generation of unscrupulous and ambitious egoists.<sup>28</sup>

It is not at all difficult to understand that the city regarded the new philosophy as a threat to its own stability. The city-state could not tolerate any weakening of its ideological citadel, the belief in the city-protecting gods. Opinion in Athens thus reacted with the same resentment, and perhaps even more vigorously, against the teachers and sponsors of the new science as against Euripides' profanation and criticism of the sacred myths and stories. Whatever particular and personal motives came into play to bring the indignation to a head, the charges and lawsuits brought against Anaxagoras and Protagoras were a measure of self-defense on the part of the *polis*.

According to Plutarch, a decree brought in by Diopeithes at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War made the teaching of new doctrines about meteorological phenomena an offense as grave as downright denial of the gods.<sup>29</sup> Seven years after this decree, Aristophanes exposed Socrates' 'Thoughtery' on the stage and made the Athenians realize once more that whoever ventured on 'physical' explanations of celestial phenomena destroyed the authority and the status of the old gods ('For with

what aim did ye insult the Gods, And pry around the dwellings of the Moon?'<sup>30</sup>). And the men who brought Socrates to trial in 399 charged that he 'did not believe in the gods in whom the city believes'. In Plato's *Apology* they try to substantiate their charge by maintaining that he does not 'believe in the godhead of the sun or moon, like other men', but 'says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth'.<sup>31</sup> Evidently thought had to travel a long way before a more profound theory of the nature and behavior of the celestial bodies could be used as the strongest argument for the existence of gods and as the best means of restoring them to their original position in the city-state.

The very fact that the existence of the Olympian and city-protecting gods became a matter of discussion must have been revolutionary in Athens. This discussion must have been extensive as well as intensive; the comparatively few passages in extant works cannot convey an adequate impression of its extent. Yet even though the history of the development and spread of advanced notions remains to a large extent obscure, we are aware of the general intellectual trend of which these notions were, after all, only a phase. Whether attacked and discussed or not, the gods were losing ground. Thinking in Athens passed through a general process of secularization, adjusting itself to new ways and methods of investigation, which could not have developed as long as everything was thought 'full of gods' and the gods were considered the authors of what came to pass. We have noticed that a 'natural' causality replaces divine causation in the field of celestial and other physical phenomena. In other areas too, the study of a thing's 'nature'—its natural habits and the laws and rules which in a not-at-all miraculous way govern its behavior—could lead to new understanding and, what was even more important, could guide action along a surer path where predictability seemed to promise success. Even human 'nature' became a subject of this kind of study. For it appeared perfectly possible to find out a good deal about the customary reactions and responses of human beings and the mechanism of human motives; and the more one knew about these things, the better one could not only understand such past and present ac-

tions as lay open before the eye, but even reconstruct those which were less obvious, predict those of the future, and secure an influence over them; for knowledge was power. Euripides, as has already been noticed, was such a student of human nature, but he was not the only one. Regularity and a definite correspondence, never or seldom failing, between cause and effect held good also in the political sphere. The speeches of Thucydides bristle with observations of this kind: Power has its laws which govern its increase and decrease; political expansion produces certain reactions; the sympathies and aversions, more generally, the emotions of groups, parties, or nations follow a certain course and may be more or less anticipated if the influences which work on them are known. The emancipated intellect, freed from the shackles of traditional religious views which for so long had hampered its free exercise, rejoices to see that large areas of human life can be controlled and conquered and loses no time in beginning to chart them. It also attempts to construct or reconstruct the probable sequence of events from a few data. By paying attention to the inherent characteristics or the normal concomitants of the data or known facts and by expecting such reactions on the part of the persons involved as your knowledge of human nature allows you to anticipate, you can form an opinion about the probable outcome of a course of action on which you happen to embark. This is a wiser procedure than consulting an oracle. In the law courts too, instead of relying on the gods' anxiety for a just decision or giving credit to oaths sworn in their names, it pays to analyze the situation as it is presented and to reconstruct the whole in the light of what ordinary experience teaches to be certain or, at least, probable (*εἰκός*). If the adversary's account is at variance with such a rational reconstruction, this tells against him even more strongly than the absence of witnesses or of such other forms of extraneous evidence as used to play a decisive part in the traditional procedure. Established facts may be used for inference beyond them by anyone who knows what other facts as a rule either precede or follow them. Human intelligence is capable of abstracting from empirical observations a convincing general prop-

osition. The passion for arguments and discussion which is an outstanding feature of this period must be traced to the same new confidence in the efficiency and reliability of man's own reason. Whether the heightening of belief in the powers of the human intellect is the cause or the result of the weakening of the old religion, or whether it is a development somehow parallel to it is one of those questions on which it is idle to attempt a decision. Still it is obvious that in learning to rely on observation, inference, and rational calculation men became accustomed to new standards of evidence, certainty, and plausibility, and developed a new sense for what human beings *can* know. Conclusions based on experience and rational construction must have seemed to many people more certain than what had been accepted on the strength of authority or tradition. Evidently, the gods were in this latter category; and although only a generation before it would have been deemed foolish and unreasonable to doubt their existence and to rely too much on one's own deductions from empirical data, the situation had now become more or less the opposite.<sup>32</sup>

Against this background we may understand Protagoras' famous dictum: 'Concerning the gods I cannot know for certain whether they exist or not, nor what they are like in form. There are many things that hinder certainty—the obscurity of the matter and the shortness of man's life.'<sup>33</sup> We do not know much about either the context or the tendency of this remark, and there are some other items in the tradition about Protagoras with which it is not easy to harmonize. But we can, nevertheless, understand it as springing from a familiarity with new standards of certainty and a new approach to the problem of reliable 'human' knowledge.

Scepticism in matters of religion reached its extreme position when it attempted to 'explain' religion. Such attempts at explanation, no matter whether along historical or psychological or still other lines, almost always indicate that the object which is being explained is no longer recognized as existing *de iure* and as deserving the position which it holds. Men do not 'explain' what they do not question; as long as everybody believed in Father



Zeus and Pallas Athena there was no need for explaining them. But when this belief began to be regarded as a curious aberration, the powerful hold which it had had over people's minds and which it still continued to have with the majority became a problem. And Reason felt strong enough to explain even the unreasonable. 'Prodicus of Ceos [said] that the men of old regarded as gods the sun and moon, rivers and fountains, and in general everything serviceable to human life, because of its serviceableness, just as the Egyptians deify the Nile. Hence bread was regarded as Demeter, wine as Dionysus, water as Poseidon, fire as Hephaestus, and so on with every useful thing.' Other theories were somewhat later put forward by Democritus. He suggested that events in the heavens—not so much, let us note,<sup>34</sup> the regular ones which are indicative of order and law, but rather such rare and exceptional phenomena as eclipses of sun and moon, conjunctions of the stars, etc., and the less unusual but still spectacular thunder and lightning—frightened men and gave rise in them to the notion of powerful, superhuman beings. Elsewhere he refers to beings of 'superhuman size' who appear to men (in dreams?) and seem to know about the future. In the light of his atomic theory, experiences of the kind would not be at all incompatible with the real existence of gods; and we should in fact beware of crediting Democritus with radical atheistic views. It is possible that he declared 'wise men' of the past responsible for the origin of religion.<sup>35</sup> Such a statement would suggest that he did regard religion as man-made, but the passage in question is open to more than one interpretation.

Of the few explanations of religion which we happen to know, that of Critias is of peculiar interest to us, not so much because he was Plato's uncle as because he concentrates on precisely the same aspect of religion to which we have paid particular attention, the relation between religion and the city. The point of his daring theory is easily missed unless we realize that its starting point is the relationship between the gods and the city which actually existed in Greece. Critias saw clearly that the function of the gods in this alliance was to lend added authority to the existing laws and the official morality. But while generations of

citizens had accepted this close association between the gods and the laws and institutions of their city as proof of the latter's holiness and sacrosanct quality, Critias' rationalism led him to radically opposite conclusions. For him, the traditional association proved that the lawgivers introduced, nay actually 'invented' the gods and that the benefit which accrues to the laws from the religious atmosphere which surrounds them had been hoped for by their authors whose clever scheme bore the expected fruits:

Although the laws kept them from open deeds of violence, men went on doing them in secret; and then it was, I believe, that some clever and sagacious man first invented for mortals the fear of the gods, so that there might be something to frighten the wicked, even though their acts or words or thoughts were secret. For that reason he introduced the doctrine that the divine is a spirit endowed with the vigour of immortal life, hearing and seeing by means of his thought and with excess of wisdom noting these deeds. . . . And for the dwelling of the gods he chose the place that would have the most startling effect on men, . . . the round sky above us, where he saw the lightnings with the dreadful crash of thunder.<sup>36</sup>

The work of destruction is thus complete. When rationalistic theory dissolves the bond between the gods and the institutions of the city, the latter lose their authority, the former their existence. Both are now seen to be man-made; and for the gods to be exposed as man-made spells their death-sentence.

## NOTES

1 Sophocles, *Ant.* 282-8 (tr. by R. C. Jebb, Cambridge, 1891).

2 *Ibid.* 450-60. Cf. Lysias 6. 10.

3 Cf. T. B. L. Webster. *An Introduction to Sophocles* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 55 ff.; H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London, 1939), *passim* in his chapters on Sophocles, esp. p. 144. I may as well say that while I am ready to include Creon in the rather varied gallery of Sophoclean ἀγαθαὶ φύσεις (see Kitto, p. 128), I cannot agree with those critics who regard Antigone's role as secondary, deny her the quality of an ἀγαθὴ φύσις, and hold that she is decidedly wrong in what she does.

4 Soph., *Trach.* 582 f.

5 Medea, Phaedra, and Hecuba in *Hec.* make ample use of their intellectual powers, but their calculations and their carefully thought out schemes serve ends which are set up by their passions.

6 Views of this kind are set forth in the extant remains of the Ἀλήθεια of

the 'Sophist' Antiphon. Ettore Bignone, *Studi sul spirito antico* (Naples, 1938), pp. 66 ff., argues that Antiphon does not adopt these views, but discusses them in order to point out their weaknesses. I am inclined to agree with Bignone, yet must confess that even after his careful investigations the relation between Antiphon and the 'Sophists' remains rather obscure.

7 Plato, *Gorg.* 482 ff. For an interpretation of 'justice' as the synonym of power see *Rep.* 1. 338 c ff. Cf. below, pp. 170 f., and Bignone, pp. 22 ff., 32 ff.

8 Plato, *Rep.* 2. 365 d: θεὸς οὐτε λανθάνειν οὐτε βιάσασθαι δυνατόν may be the thought of a man who hesitates to commit an act of injustice. But how much force is a consideration of this kind likely to have? Plato knows of arguments which will help to overcome such scruples. See below, p. 28.

9 Cf. James Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece* (Edinburgh, 1908); W. W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (tr. by Gilbert Highet, New York, 1939), especially the chapter on Aeschylus, pp. 235-65; and Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy* (Oxford, 1940), especially pp. 72-110. On this subject more will be said in Chapter III.

10 Eur., *Herc.* 339-46. The Greek text of the second 'in vain' clause has not been restored with certainty. On this and also on the meaning of ἀμαθής in the last line see the comments of Wilamowitz, *Euripides Herakles, Zweite Bearbeitung* (Berlin, 1930), *ad loc.* Cf. in general the discussions of Euripides' criticism of the old religion and mythology in Wilhelm Nestle, *Euripides, der Dichter der griechischen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart, 1901), pp. 87-101, with whose judgment I frequently disagree, and Paul Decharme, *Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre* (Paris, 1893), pp. 64-93, who distinguishes two types of criticism, that from morality and that from common sense.

11 Eur., *Ion* 436-51. Creusa's own reaction (especially 907-22) is even more violent, but at the same time of a more personal subjective character. I discuss it here as little as Eur., *Hipp.* 1441 and other passages quoted by Nestle and Decharme.

12 Eur., *Androm.* 1161-5.

13 Eur., *Frag.* 266 in August Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1926).

14 Eur., *Iph. Taur.* 380-4; see below, p. 41.

15 Eur., *Hipp.* 451-61; *Hec.* 1313-21.

16 Compare, e. g., Aesch., *Agam.* 177 with 249. It is legitimate to regard the reference by the chorus in *Agamemnon* to Zeus and δίκη as the *Leitmotif* not only of this play but of the whole trilogy. On the importance of the same *Leitmotif* in the trilogy of which *The Suppliants* is a part, Kitto (see above, Note 3), pp. 19 ff., and Max Pohlenz, *Die Griechische Tragödie* (Leipzig, 1930) 1. 33, agree, though Kitto's view is evidently the more profound and more likely to be correct. On the Theban trilogy see my paper in *T. A. P. A.* 68 (1937). 196-213.

17 Aesch., *Agam.* 369-72.

18 Cf. Solon 13. 27-32; see also 4. 14 ff.

19 See above, Note 18.

20 Sextus, *adv. math.* 9. 53.

21 Eur., *Frag.* 286 translated in F. M. Cornford, *Greek Religious Thought* (London, 1923).

22 Plato, *Gorg.* 470 d ff.; cf. 479 d, 525 d; *Rep.* 8. See also *Phaedo* 82 a; *Polit.* 301 b f. For the *Laws* cf. below, p. 151.

23 Eur., *Tro.* 1242 and 469 f. Cf. *Hec.* 488.

24 Thucydides 5. 84.

25 Eur., *Frag.* 506. Cf. with the first sentence Aesch., *Eum.* 273-6.

26 Plato, *Rep.* 2. 364 f.

27 R. K. Hack, *God in Greek Philosophy to the Time of Socrates* (Princeton, 1931) deals with an aspect of Presocratic thought to which John Burnet and other scholars have failed to do full justice. For a different view see Pierre Bovet, *Le Dieu de Platon d'après l'ordre chronologique des dialogues* (thèse, Genève, 1902), who thinks that in the Presocratic systems there was no place at all for a concept of God (pp. 83-115) and that Plato was the first to introduce it into philosophical discussion (p. 139).

28 Cf. Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 369, and Gilbert Murray, *Aristophanes* (Oxford, 1933), p. 93. I confess that I still cling to what Professor Murray (p. 92) calls the 'most generally accepted view'.

29 Plutarch, *v. Per.* 32. Cf. A. B. Drachmann, *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity* (tr. by Ingeborg Andersen, London, 1922), pp. 25 f. A. E. Taylor in *Class. Quart.* 11 (1917). 81-7, argues that Anaxagoras' trial took place at an earlier date, about 450. He has the support of a part of the biographical tradition (Satyrus and possibly Demetrius of Phalerum) but fails to do justice to the rest of it which includes authors as important as Plutarch and Diodorus (*i.e.* possibly Ephorus). Of the four biographical authorities cited in Diogenes Laertius 2. 12-4, one, Sotion, definitely disagrees with Satyrus, and Hermippus and Hieronymus are closer to Sotion's account than to that of Satyrus. The arguments which Professor Taylor derives from Plato rest on a number of assumptions which not everyone would grant. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, p. 136, thinks that Anaxagoras' philosophy clashed not so much with the State-religion as with the professional interests of the seers. There may be some truth in this view, but I doubt that it is the whole truth. Professor Nilsson seems to overemphasize the fact that the Sun and Moon had no cult.

30 Aristophanes, *Nub.* 1506 f. (tr. by B. B. Rogers, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1924).

31 Plato, *Apol.* 26 d.

32 Cf. Jaeger's chapter on Thucydides, *Paideia*, pp. 379-408, esp. pp. 382 f., 388, 396. See also my *Antiphonstudien* (Berlin, 1931), pp. 47-58.

33 Cf. Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (5th ed., Berlin, 1934-37) 80 B 4.

34 Karl Reinhardt, in *Hermes* 47 (1912). 510, seems to overlook this fact. The fragment is preserved by Sextus, *adv. math.* 9. 24. See Diels-Kranz 68 A 75. For Prodicus see *ibid.* 9. 18 (84 B 5). Cf. in general Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, pp. 269 ff.

35 Frags. B 166, B 30 in Diels-Kranz.

36 Frag. 1 in Nauck. Drachmann (see above, Note 29), pp. 46 f., suggests that Critias borrowed some ideas from Democritus, others from Prodicus. He warns us, perhaps rightly, against identifying Critias himself with ideas that are obviously assigned to a character in his tragedy.

### CHAPTER III

## THE DEFENSE AND RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGION

WE NEED not doubt that many Athenian citizens remained perfectly unimpressed and unaffected by the daring and revolutionary new views which we have studied in the preceding chapter. In fact, these people are likely to have formed the majority. Those who lent their ear and opened their minds to the new ideas—not only in religion but in other fields as well—henceforth constituted a kind of intellectual class, not separated by any clear line from the bulk of their fellow citizens, but none the less palpably different from them. This cleavage is a new feature in the life of Athens. Previously, the citizenry had been intellectually more uniform; even great poets and leading thinkers who saw more deeply into the laws and nature of things had hardly caused a disruption in the public outlook. The disruption has now become a fact: every Athenian belongs either to the progressive or to the conventional group.

To belong to the 'intellectuals' did not necessarily imply that one had to accept the startling new doctrines which were in the air. It only meant that one took them seriously; some people were ready to discuss, others refused to discuss because discussion itself was the characteristic instrument of the forces of destruction. Discussion might well lead to a reëstablishing of religion and the gods, but every position thus gained would in some way or other inevitably bear the marks of its origin in a fight against the enemies of tradition. It would be fortified by arguments and theories. In other words, while the great majority of citizens continued to believe in the gods, the intellectuals believed also in certain propositions concerning the gods. They had a 'theology' and their religion had a 'theoretical' foundation. In

this chapter and the following we shall deal with theology—in the broad sense of the word, *i. e.*, with convictions concerning the nature and activities of the deity.

Actually, previous developments in the realm of thought pointed the way and furnished the means by which the edge could be taken from the adversaries' arguments. The first who pointed out crude and primitive features in the traditional picture of the gods had not been actual or potential atheists or free-thinkers, but profoundly religious men who protested in the interest of what they considered true religion. Even the Homeric poet who insists that mortals wrongly blame the gods for misfortunes which befall them as the result of their own follies is protesting against religious conceptions, clearly taken for granted in other strata of Homeric poetry, which he considers unworthy and undignified.<sup>1</sup> We might continue discussing the contributions made by older poets but it will for our purpose suffice if for a moment we focus attention on the figure of Xenophanes, whose vigorous and outspoken denunciations constitute a landmark in the history of religious thought. 'Homer and Hesiod have ascribed to the gods all things that among men are a shame and a reproach—theft and adultery and deceiving one another' (and unfortunately 'from the beginning all have learned from Homer'). 'If oxen or horses . . . had hands and could draw with them, . . . horses would draw the shapes of gods like horses, oxen like oxen; each kind would represent their bodies just like their own forms.' 'The Ethiopians say their gods are black and flat-nosed; the Thracians, that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired.' Who speaks thus will insist that divine nature, divine appearance, divine behavior must be different from human. God is mind and his operations are the operations of mind, no others. Xenophanes, the philosopher, inspired with a passionate belief in the dignity and superior worth of the wise man, held that the same capacity of thought—the activity of the mind—must in its consummate essence be the nature of the divine being. God is not like man, but like the best in man freed from the encumbrance of his less perfect organs.<sup>2</sup>

To discuss Aeschylus' religion at due length would mean to

write another book, and so too with Pindar.<sup>3</sup> A world lies between the Homeric gods, who are subject to every kind of human weakness, passion, pettiness, instability of mind and vulnerability of body, and the Zeus of Aeschylus, whose nature is Mind and whose works are the works of Justice. In fact, Aeschylus' conception of Zeus is so profound and at the same time so comprehensive and so fair to the mythical tradition that it incorporates even the unjust, rash, violent Zeus, Zeus the 'tyrant'. He too is Zeus, but the Zeus of the past, of a bygone order. Aeschylus' idea of a just Zeus who acts without effort and in ways too deep for human understanding has emerged from a struggle with the injustices of Zeus which were part of the tradition; the history of Greek thought about Zeus has been absorbed into Zeus's own nature, is his own history.

A new conception of the gods and their status had also taken shape in the physical philosophy of the Presocratics. Naturally, these men argued primarily with one another and only incidentally with Homer or other poets. Moreover, the object of most or all of them was to connect the deity with cosmic processes, with Becoming and Passing-away and to define the role of the divine principle in relation to these processes. Yet they too had, by a different road, arrived at a sublimation of the traditional views and at a more exalted, less 'naïve' idea of the divine powers. Thus they too could help to ward off attacks.

Anyone who had become imbued with, say, Aeschylus' views of the nature of Zeus would feel that the charges which were brought against the immoral traits of the Greek gods somehow missed their target. These charges were unfair inasmuch as the myths which provided assailants with their material were no longer representative; their place had been taken by much loftier religious conceptions. In any case, these poets and thinkers pointed the way to meet these charges.

Euripides, as we know, would allow the opponents of religion to state their case whenever an appropriate situation arose in the context of his plots, but he was impartial enough to give the defenders of religion an equal opportunity to express their views.

These defenders are not committed to a definite doctrine. Euripides is familiar with a considerable variety of views; among them, as we shall see, is included even a theory which separates the question of Justice altogether from the religious issue. On the whole, when his characters plead the cause of the Olympian gods, they discuss their nature in terms of a general notion of ethical perfection: the gods must be thought of as free from human weakness and vice, free from all the crudities which were part of the old religion.

In a few instances we find in his plays the purified conception of the gods placed beside or even somehow opposed to the fashionable denunciations of the same gods as immoral or inhuman. When Iphigenia (in *Iphigenia in Tauris*) shudders at the thought of the human sacrifices which are expected of her, her first impulse is to blame the goddess Artemis for her cruelty; but on second thought she decides that it is not the goddess's fault that this practice exists, but that the savages among whom she lives picture the goddess after their own image. Let us remember that Xenophanes had already asserted that the notions of the gods in vogue among different nations reflected the nature of those nations rather than the truth about the gods. The relativity of religious concepts and their obvious dependence on the physical and moral nature of those holding them were convenient points of departure for anyone who aimed at establishing a more lofty doctrine, though it may be only an accident of tradition that we do not, in this period, find them used also by the enemies of every kind of religion. Iphigenia's belief is summed up in the last line of her speech: 'None of [the] Gods is vile.' <sup>4</sup>

In *Heracles*, Theseus makes a well-meant effort to dispel the shadows of grief and remorse from the mind of Heracles. He tries to convince Heracles that to rush into crime and misfortune is human; nay, not even the gods are above it. And yet, far from worrying about their ignominious conduct (maltreatment of parents, intermarriages against the law, etc.), they continue in undisturbed enjoyment of their divine status. Heracles refuses to listen to such arguments:



## The Background

I deem not that the Gods for spousals crave  
Unhallowed: tales of Gods' hands manacled  
Ever I scorned. . . .  
For God hath need, if God indeed he be,  
Of nought: these be the minstrels' sorry tales.<sup>5</sup>

This time, then, the poets are responsible for the origin of tales which are neither true nor worthy of the gods. God is perfect; he is in need of nothing; he is, we may say, self-sufficient, a quality on which later theology did in fact insist. Still for Euripides it is easier to describe this perfection in negative terms; it consists in the absence of wants which, if present, might lead to base acts.

Similarly, in *The Trojan Women*, Hecuba and Helen take different sides on the question whether weaknesses and ambitions which are typical human motives may actuate the gods as well. Hecuba has some scathing comments to make on the stupidity of thinking the gods affected by such motives.<sup>6</sup> The passage includes interesting remarks on the fact that, not the gods, but man himself is responsible for his mistakes; but we need not for our purposes discuss it in detail.

Even without the concept of a perfect deity in the background, myths could be reinterpreted, and any phase of them that was either morally objectionable or too crude for an intellectually advanced generation could be explained away. The hidden—and deeper—meaning of these stories was quite different from what they superficially appeared to mean. In other words, they had to be accepted not literally, but allegorically. We should not, however, think that all allegorical interpretation was of the same type. It could be practised along very different lines and with very different aims according to the view of the gods' true nature which the interpreter happened to favor. Metrodorus of Lampsacus, who seems to have lived in this period, proceeded on the assumption that the names of the gods stood for physical entities and that their myths symbolized processes in nature. We can hardly tell whether he allowed at all for anything divine, and we ought perhaps to have included him in the

preceding chapter among the destroyers of religion. Plato, who knew a less ambitious and less scientific type of interpreters, suggests in a passage of *Phaedrus* that it would be worthy of their ingenuity to explain the well-known Attic story of Boreas' carrying off Oritheia as meaning that 'a northern gust carried her over the rocks.' Thus the game continued to be played in the fourth century; Antisthenes tried his hand at it, and it will be taken up and carried on by the Stoics.<sup>7</sup> But the best instance that we know of an explanation which removes a scurrilous mythological detail and replaces it with something more refined belongs to the end of the fifth century. It occurs in Euripides' *Bacchae*; it is based on the similarity of two Greek words: *μῆρος* and *ἄμῆρος*. Tiresias, whom Euripides obviously wishes to represent a type of rationalistic theologian and interpreter of myths, contrives to explain away the story that Dionysus after his birth was sewn into Zeus's leg. He lays this version to human misunderstanding and substitutes for it another in which Zeus is associated with the ether.<sup>8</sup> A story about Zeus and the ether would undoubtedly be more to the taste of contemporary intellectuals, who in matters of theology had become rather fastidious. Euripides' own, much more profound view of Dionysus must be reserved for another section of this chapter.

The gods, obviously, lacked all the characteristics of weak and wicked humankind. That they were perfect and enjoyed the most desirable type of existence was henceforth axiomatic. But it still remained to define their perfection and also to decide what kind of activity, if any, suited perfect beings. Much Greek thought on Perfection, though by no means all, will in future centre in the problem of the divine nature. Should one continue to think that they had anything in common with human beings? The gods of Greek mythology unquestionably had a great deal in common with man: to conceive of the Olympians as having human shapes and bodies had been customary for centuries. Sculptors and painters took their human semblance for granted. On the other hand, Xenophanes and Aeschylus had known that God was pure Mind and acted without any physical effort.

Physical anthropomorphism was of a piece with moral anthropomorphism, and those who insisted that the gods were in every respect perfect could not confine the attack to their anthropomorphic morality. Thus the problem arose and became increasingly difficult to ignore—whether the gods, whom their defenders were so anxious to clear of every human weakness, could still be identified with the traditional characters of the Olympians.

We remember the agnostic confession of Protagoras (above, p. 33) which includes the admission of his ignorance as to the 'shape' (or 'form', 'type'—the Greek word is *ἰδέα*) of the gods. A feeling of ignorance and uncertainty is more than once expressed in Euripides' plays: 'Zeus, if he exists; for I know of him only by hearsay'; 'What mortal who has pushed his search to the furthest bound dares say . . . what God is, or what is not God?'<sup>9</sup> We have discussed agnostic tendencies in the preceding chapter and are now in a position to understand that even those who believed or wished to believe in the gods were puzzled by the questions in what shape and form they were to be thought of and what their true nature was. If they turned to those concepts of God which had emerged from philosophical speculation they might find a new god, but a god who was at home not in the city, but in the universe.

If anyone had a right to doubt that there was a Justice in Heaven and that the gods concerned themselves with human beings, it was Hecuba after the sack of Troy. Yet, when Helen is led past her and to all appearance is about to receive punishment, a feeling stirs in her that there may after all be a divine power that 'leads human destinies along the path of justice'. She wonders, however, what kind of power it may be, and her wondering and groping between alternative possibilities are typical of the whole period in which, with the old beliefs undermined, no new and more sublime religion had as yet clearly emerged:

O Earth's Upbearer, thou whose throne is Earth,  
 Whoe'er thou be, O past our finding out,  
 Zeus, be thou Nature's Law, or Mind of Man [*νοῦς*],  
 Thee I invoke; for, treading soundless paths,  
 To Justice' goal thou bring'st all mortal things.<sup>10</sup>

It seems possible to trace some of the conceptions of God between which she wavers to a definite, philosophical system. The passage certainly shows, and others in Euripides help to confirm the fact, that Athenians who had lost their confidence in the traditional religion and yet hesitated to go the whole way with the opponents of religion turned to the philosophers and physicists for guidance. Some of these physicists may have gone to the length of identifying the deity with that 'necessity' and strict causality which characterize the pattern of physical processes. 'Necessity' (*ἀνάγκη*) is the universal characteristic of all these processes. Such a god would be immanent in nature. 'Necessity of Nature' and 'Mind of Man' may strike us as curious alternatives; the two concepts seem to be separated by the whole distance that lies between a naturalistic and an idealistic or mentalistic position. But for the ancients the contrast may not have been quite so great. Ideas of a divine Mind ordering the Universe and theories suggesting that the human mind is homogeneous with the divine were in the air when Euripides wrote his plays; but for linguistic reasons it is difficult to explain Hecuba's invocation of the 'Mind of Man' (*νοῦς βροτῶν*) on the basis of these theories. She inclines for a moment to the belief that the *human* mind is actually the only source of reasonableness and justice in the world and that there are no gods apart from it. 'Our own mind is God in every one of us,' says Euripides elsewhere (Frag. 1018). Remarks like these are evidence of a tendency to replace religion by an anthropocentric humanism. Protagoras' axiom, 'Man is the measure of all things,' reflects a similar anthropocentric humanism which differs in outlook from the religious humanism of the early Greek poets and thinkers, the theistic humanism of Plato and the Stoics, and the deistic humanism of Aristotle. The words 'O Earth's Upbearer', etc., have rightly been referred to the ether.<sup>11</sup> The ether figured as the divine element in the philosophy of Diogenes of Apollonia and of Archelaus, and an identification of the ether with Zeus or the divine principle occurs very frequently in Euripides.

In this varied assembly of candidates for the position of the deity there is one lone survivor from the old religion. Hecuba

is still able to address the power that stands for Justice by the name of Zeus. Zeus had, in fact, more than any other of the Olympians, changed his nature towards something nobler, keeping abreast of the intensified demand for Justice in the world-order and human affairs and becoming in Aeschylus actually identical with the idea of Justice. In the light of his history, he still has a better claim to represent Justice—if there is such a thing—than the ether, the upholder of the earth, or the necessity of nature. The demand for a reformed religion was strong, but the real question was whether the new religion could still centre in the Olympians, once the concept of them had been radically cleared of all disreputable and anthropomorphic features, or whether entirely new deities must take their place. And although Hecuba derives new confidence from the evidence of Justice in the world, which at the moment happened to strike her with overwhelming force, it was still far from clear how essential justice was to be in the new concept of the deity which would eventually emerge from the crisis in religion.

At times, Euripides inclines to the view that the gods and goddesses of Greek religion are, so to speak, symbolic exponents of those passions, emotions, ideals which profoundly influence man's life. Aphrodite personifies the instinct of love, Artemis in *Hippolytus* the ideal of chastity, the Erinyes are the pangs of conscience. Ambition and similar impulses which are not yet represented among the Olympians may also be elevated to the rank of goddesses. At other times, as we have seen, Euripides thinks of the deity in cosmic terms. Everything in the realm of religious thought and feeling is in ferment.

The gods may after all be just, as Aeschylus had insisted they were. Or justice may be immanent in the very course of human affairs, and the gods may exist but have no concern with it. They may be physical principles, or emotional forces, or possibly a blind, irrational, and impersonal power like Fate. Or there may be no gods at all, and yet Justice may come about all by itself. Or there may be neither gods nor Justice. The results of science too point both ways; everything depends upon the system or the phase of a system on which you focus attention. You may be

convinced that whatever happens in the Cosmos has its natural causes and comes to pass by mechanical laws, that the heaven is 'full of stones', or you may prefer the doctrine that the ether is a divine element, something at the same time spiritual and akin to your own mind. To which of all these conflicting propositions should one hold? <sup>12</sup>

The problem of divine justice and of the gods' interest in human affairs was especially acute and vexing. In the preceding chapter we have studied the developments which destroyed the old faith. What arguments could be used against the sceptics who could so easily point out instance after instance in human experience in which divine retribution had failed to overtake the wicked or in which the pious and righteous had suffered? Naturally, the opposite also happens, and whenever it did happen it aided the defenders of a divine Providence (Hecuba's 'return to religion' is prompted by an experience of the kind and may well be typical). But since either party might produce a considerable amount of empirical evidence in support of its tenets, the issue could hardly be settled on this basis.

Was there any other approach to the problem? We have seen that earlier poets had made it a point that Justice need not come about within the limits of a single life and that the ways of the gods were not easily recognized. But this view does not seem to have appealed to the somewhat impatient contemporaries of Euripides. Yet why was it necessary to focus attention persistently on individual human experiences? There were other matters to be observed about human beings and human life in general that testified to the existence of something like a plan and thus suggested the influence of a designing power greater and wiser than man himself:

Praise to the God who shaped in order's mould  
Our lives redeemed from chaos and the brute,  
First, by implanting reason, giving then  
The tongue, word-herald, to interpret speech;  
Earth's fruit for food, for nurturing thereof  
Raindrops from heaven . . . ; therewithal  
Shelter from storm, and shadow from the heat,

Sea-tracking ships, that traffic might be ours  
 With fellow-men of that which each land lacks;  
 And, for invisible things or dimly seen,  
 Soothsayers watch the flame. . . .  
 Are we not arrogant then, when *all life's needs*  
*God giveth*, therewith not to be content?

Thus speaks Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants*.<sup>13</sup>

It is no longer a political deity whose case Theseus, the mythical exponent and symbol of Athens' political life, is pleading. And the concept of 'Providence' is here completely severed from the idea of 'Justice' and reformulated in teleological terms. The point at issue is not whether he who leads a pious and just life will be rewarded, but whether the good and desirable things in man's life outweigh the undesirable, and whether man has been provided with the physical and technical equipment that he needs. The passage represents the first argument for, and from, teleology. There is design in man's shape and anatomy, and there is plan and thought behind civilization. This is a new approach, though the ground for it may have been prepared to a larger extent than we realize. No doubt civilization had become a subject for speculation in fifth-century Athens. In Aeschylus' grandiose idea of Prometheus this old fire-demon becomes the great benefactor of the human race, to whom mankind is indebted for the blessings of civilization. In another of his plays a similar role is assigned to Palamedes.<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus even wonders how the gods may react to the progress which man has made without their help. The arts, the crafts, the activities which are typical of civilized society are the great reason for human pride in Sophocles' humanistic philosophy ('Many are the wonders and none is more wonderful than man'). The sophists gave a new impetus to historical—or semi-historical—and at the same time theoretical study of civilization and it seems to have been generally agreed that civilization (for which incidentally the Greek language lacked a word<sup>15</sup>) was the thing that distinguished man from the animals. Even man's political existence could be viewed as a phase of the more inclusive concept, civilized existence. In the 'myth' which Protagoras tells in Plato's dialogue, and which

is probably typical of his thought if not of sophistic thought generally, the gods are described as authors of various elements which make for civilization. We may wonder whether advanced and free spirits like Protagoras really gave back to the gods what believers like Aeschylus had taken from them.

In the passage of the *Suppliants* stress is laid on the crafts and on inventions which serve to protect man's life. In this respect, the passage is still close to earlier mythical or half-mythical accounts of the origins and blessings of civilization. It is not even suggested that, having received mind and intelligence, man himself set out to invent those things which made his life more secure. At any rate, an understanding mind and language—the inward and the outward *logos* as later philosophers would say—were the first gifts which man received from the gods, and by their provision he was raised above the status of other animals. God, as a rule, is prone to endow man 'first' with such intellectual instruments if He himself is Mind or Spirit, and we feel that Theseus is speaking of a power whose characteristic manifestations are design and craftsmanship.

Some of the items adduced in this passage recur in the more elaborate argument for Providence which Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* puts into the mouth of Socrates. There too (4. 3) it is pointed out that the gods have taken care to provide for the needs of man. In fact this teleology, naïvely anthropocentric as it is, teaches that everything has been created for the use of man. The gods, it is suggested, have endowed man with reason and thus enabled him to make progress in the arts essential for civilization; but before Socrates comes to this point he dwells on what seems to be even more decisive, namely the idea that day and night, the sequence of the seasons, animals and plants, water, fire, the sun, all exist for the benefit of man and man alone. The divine power, being itself invisible, manifests itself in what it does for man. Inasmuch as attention is given to the cosmos and its relation to man this passage is half-way between that in the *Suppliants* and the even more significant system of physical teleology on which we find Xenophon drawing in another chapter of the *Memorabilia* (1. 4). There is much force



in Professor Theiler's suggestion<sup>16</sup> that the source of at least some parts of this chapter is Diogenes of Apollonia; but, whether he or someone else whose name we do not know, the thinker clearly was anxious to determine the typical traits and working habits of the divine Mind through an examination of its products. In other words he made the idea of an intelligent organizer of the world (the idea which Anaxagoras had conceived but failed to apply) the guiding principle of his physical system. The existence of a divine Providence appears not so much in the creation of various arts, crafts, and instruments to be used by man for the improvement of his living conditions, but in the fact that man himself, the human body, is a perfect piece of divine handicraft and that all its organs are excellent instruments admirably adapted to their respective purposes. They could not serve their respective functions so well if they were not designed with these purposes in view. The evidence thus provided for a Mind that plans is seized upon by Xenophon and turned into an argument for the existence of a god whose nature and working correspond on a much larger scale to those of the human mind.

We are less interested in the physical theory which is reflected in this chapter than in the conception of God and his relation to human beings. It is stressed that anything that so evidently serves its purpose as do the organs of the human body cannot be the work of 'chance'. Not *τύχη* but *γνώμη* must account for them, not chance and accident, but plan and intention. The human race has clearly been singled out as an object of particular care since in so many respects it is better off than any other species of animal. One possession that makes man superior to all others is his soul, and if by the power of his soul he directs his activity, this may be indicative of the organ by which the gods control not only their own activity but everything that happens. That God must be of the nature of a Soul, a Mind, a planning intelligence, a beneficent and foreseeing power akin to the best in man is a thought which runs like a thread through the whole chapter, and there is more than one attempt actually to prove this character of the divine nature by clear and logical arguments. The most significant of these arguments is, probably,

that which, from the fact that the elements contained in the human body are small particles of the same elements in the Universe, infers that man's mind and power of thought are likewise fragments of a cosmic power that thinks, administers, and takes care of everything.<sup>17</sup> Although the teleological arguments are drawn from the human body, it is assumed that the power which has done so much for man must be looked for in the Cosmos. This line of reasoning is typical of the state of the religious problem after the breakdown of the city-state religion. But the individual with whom Socrates is discussing the question of the existence of gods still maintains that he has no evidence that the gods take care of *him* (I. 4. 11, 15), and when it is asked *what* they do for the individual Socrates' arguments become less philosophic and more conventional. The fact is that the teleological argument has replaced the old belief in a just god anxious to preserve a balance between the individual's behavior and his experience. Similarly, the conception of God as a craftsman and a designer is taking the place of the more or less anthropomorphic being who, it had been thought, in sympathy or hostility to individuals, made them prosper or suffer as they deserved.

In a passage of the chapter in Xenophon, which can hardly go back to the physicist Diogenes, it is said that God 'sees' and has eyes keener than human sight. Thus the concept of God has not yet been completely cleared of all anthropomorphic ingredients. It might even be argued that to think of God as Mind is but another variety of anthropomorphism (though of course a very refined one), and in this sense even Plato's God would be anthropomorphic.

There were signs in Athens that religion might find the support which the city-state could no longer provide in the wider reaches of the Cosmos. There the gods had originally been at home, there they had never completely ceased to be at home, and there they might now be rediscovered—especially since the new science, along with mechanical and purely physical explanations, which were naturally considered detrimental to religion, confirmed belief in a divine principle in nature. Diogenes of Apollonia gave to the divine Mind a more definite place in the

Cosmos than had Anaxagoras. For him the Mind was a concrete element, the fine substance of the air (or 'ether').<sup>18</sup> Thoughts of this kind, whether borrowed from Diogenes or from another thinker whose system was similar, are expressed in Euripides' plays and are imputed to Euripides as well as to Socrates by Aristophanes.<sup>19</sup> It is not rash to assume that they had a strong appeal and wide currency in Athens. Since the 'air' (or 'ether') was thought the finest and most sublime of the elements—so fine indeed as to be almost, but not quite, immaterial—to identify Zeus with 'air' or 'ether' did not materialize God to a degree that would have been intolerable for an Athenian of the time. On the other hand such identification had the great advantage of defining God's status and function in the Universe precisely. 'Air' was assumed to penetrate everywhere; it was something spiritual and yet sufficiently close to the material processes in the world to have an essential role in the coming to be and the passing away of things, and to account for the functions of man's senses and for his various reactions, physical, sensual, and intellectual. In his physical and anatomical explanations Diogenes could rely now on the physical, now on the spiritual quality of his 'element', could let its operation be determined by something like mechanical laws and necessities, or again insist that it was guided by knowledge, aware of rhythm and harmony, and tended towards what is 'best'.<sup>20</sup>

A spiritual or semi-spiritual god who could yet account for the physical world as it was, and who was actually himself a part of it—a deity distinctly cosmic and not at all political—seems to have been the concept for which the generation of Euripides was groping. We must bear in mind that they had not yet become aware of the fundamental difference between sensual and non-sensual entities which Plato was to teach and which, once comprehended, alters every aspect of the religious problem. We are dealing with the generation of thinkers who preceded Plato; and while it is evident that Anaxagoras' theory of *νοῦς* had left a profound mark on their speculations, we discern some tendencies to go beyond him. Generally speaking, the tendencies are these: (1) to make the divine Mind immanent in the world,

identifying it with a particular phase or element, (2) to show how the Mind has been at work, by marking the element of design and purposeful activity in man's physical structure and also, perhaps, in the structure of the universe, (3) to trace the 'life' (ζωή) in the universe to a divine source such as the air or ether which has been identified with God. Evidently 'life' and thought—planning—are more and more felt to be the primary manifestations of the deity. As the 'air' could account for 'life', and 'Mind' for purpose, the identification of these two concepts appears to have been the last solution of the religious problem that Greek speculation reached before Plato.

At the same time there seems to be taking shape, though dimly and in outlines only, a problem that was to remain with Greek Philosophy and Theology down to their very last stages: how could the deity be pure thought, 'alone with itself and not mixed with anything', as Anaxagoras said, and yet beget life and bring about the processes of change and development in the physical world? Plato's theology, resting as it does not only on 'Mind' (here he recognized Anaxagoras' epoch-making contribution) but also on 'Soul', met both requirements; but with Aristotle the problem arose afresh, and even much later thinkers still had to struggle with it and tried to bridge the gulf by their theories of 'emanations'.

It must be said once more that the generation which lived through the Peloponnesian War and witnessed the breakdown of the old Athenian city-state did not reach a definite solution of the religious problem. The different approaches to it which we have discussed were more or less tentative, and the feature most characteristic of the situation is not any particular approach but rather the general uncertainty. Is it at least possible to say that the direction in which a solution should be sought had emerged as the result of the vigorous discussions, or are we inevitably tempted to attach exaggerated importance to the seeds of later developments which we find in this period? In retrospect it would appear that 'science' was taking over the lead in the search for a new divine principle. Certainly 'science', or the investigation of nature, was in a position to offer help, since the

problem of the deity was of old standing in Greek physics and the cosmic concept of God had hardly become involved in the crisis which was fatal to the political concept. We must bear in mind that, unlike modern science, early Greek physics had never committed itself to methodical axioms which exclude the divine cause *ab initio* (I suggest that a close examination of Descartes and the developments in the field of science which originated with him would cure many of our contemporaries of the idea that it is the 'results' of science which tell against religion). The study of the Presocratic physicists has suffered a good deal from the unconscious retrojection of the modern concept of science. With the early Greek physicists the problem of the true nature of the deity was not only of fundamental importance but actually one of the problems which gave the impulse to their inquiry.

Yet, though people turned to philosophy of nature, and philosophy of nature was by now almost the only potential source of new religious beliefs, it is evident that science and philosophy of nature could not lead men back to the concept of a political deity. Physics pointed to the Cosmos as the theatre of divine operations; the original identity or alliance between the religious and the political domain seemed irretrievably lost. Even Plato will have to dispense with the gods in constructing the 'ideal city' of his *Republic* and will turn to Nature and the Universe to find his gods—though he, if anyone, could make a new and last attempt to reunite religion and the city.

Philosophy of Nature also failed to comfort those who wished, above all else, to be assured of the existence of a *just* deity that watched over their lives. To be sure, men of Alcibiades' type of mind and all those other strong-willed and self-assured individuals who thrived in the atmosphere of the Peloponnesian War would hardly have desired such assurance. They neither cared nor expected the gods to fulfill their traditional duties, nor did they bother to make themselves deserving of divine interest and protection. But the individualist's pride and confidence, his belief in his ability to shape his life by his own powers, were bound to suffer severe setbacks. The heyday of emancipated individual-

ism and rationalism was of short duration. Unpredictable circumstances and developments played havoc with the efforts even of the most resourceful. Not even we to-day with our greatly refined methods of calculation and prognostication are safe from surprises which upset our plans and frustrate our expectations, though when we realize the shortcomings of our reasoning and our methods we do not deify the irrational factor that has jeopardized our hopes. But the Greeks were still sufficiently religious to do so; and when their sanguine self-confidence had suffered they recognized that there was, after all, a power against which no human effort could prevail. Yet a rational or reasonable power it certainly was not. Nor was it in any way moral, purposeful, or constructive. It was something blind, capricious, entirely irrational. This power which might be called 'Chance' or 'Fate' (τύχη) was indifferent to right and wrong, good and bad; and its ways, if 'ways' it had, were unknowable to man. The old gods might or might not exist, but if they existed they were so perfect and self-sufficient as to be entirely unconcerned with humanity. What actually ruled man's life was 'Chance'. This belief is not so much religion as resignation, and this resignation or religion of despair was again only a temporary solution and not destined to be the Greeks' last word on the problem of the deity.

We know this outlook again from Euripides' tragedies, this time from the last set which he wrote in the last decade of the war. In these plays he shows us over and over how human reason, human calculation and anticipation come to grief, how the unexpected happens and the expected does not come to pass. He wrestles with the concept of such an irrational power supremely indifferent to human interests, approaching it in a variety of ways which we need not discuss in detail. 'Tyche', the irrational element in man's life, is not yet definitely raised to the rank of a goddess as she was to be later in the Hellenistic era, but analyses of this set of plays have shown that she has a very important function in the structure of the plots.<sup>21</sup> This recognition of 'Chance' is, as we have said, a symptom of resignation on the part of man, an admission of the failure and inadequacy of the human intellect. And if man's confident attempt to master

the world in which he lived by the methodical use of his reason had failed, it was as well to admit that there was after all truth in the popular belief that human life was directed by forces stronger than man. To expect that the course of events should correspond to the conclusions of human reasoning was as futile as to ask that it should satisfy man's sense of justice. 'The world's wise are not wise, claiming more than mortal may.' 'The simple nameless herd of Humanity hath deeds and faith that are truth enough for me.' <sup>22</sup> It was no longer the obvious thing to identify the power which swayed man's life, and which was certainly not ethical, with the Olympian gods who, ideally at least, were on the side of morality and rationality. Though doubt had been cast on this aspect of their traditional character it was still repugnant to Hellenic feeling to make Zeus or Athena or Apollo the symbolic representatives of a view that made human life utterly meaningless, irrational, and destitute of any slightest justice. The emotional and irrational religion of Dionysus was better suited to express this view of man's life. In the abandonment of the wild, orgiastic rituals of his cult, man could find the satisfaction which he had in vain expected from the use of his reason; in *his* worship he could inspire himself with a confidence of an entirely irrational kind; and this emotional confidence gave more strength to the ecstatic worshipper than the intellectual had ever derived from his belief in Reason. There was, after all, truth in religion; or if there was no truth in it there was at least strength: man could feel close to the irrational forces which ruled his life and on which he depended whether he admitted it or not. Euripides' *Bacchae* shows with appalling power the utter helplessness of Reason when it takes up the struggle against the emotional irrationalism of such a religion. The advocate of Reason who commits intellectual suicide in order to join the orgies of Dionysian lawlessness still has a better chance of self-preservation than the dogged defender of law, order, and civilized political existence, who by his vain attempt to oppose the forces of Unreason actually plays into their hands and brings destruction upon himself. Rationalists had attempted to 'explain' religion, and an ingenious explanation of the religion of Dionysus

is put forward by a character in the *Bacchae*.<sup>23</sup> But the shallow rationalistic explanation is by no means Euripides' own last word on the subject. The last word of the poet whose plays and dramatized discussions had echoed well-nigh every stage in the struggle and well-nigh every argument put forward for and against religion is the recognition of its tremendous and irresistible force and the resigned admission of the would-be rationalist that the irrational element in life is stronger than the rational.

This resignation, it is hardly necessary to say, is at the opposite extreme from what thinkers like Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia had attempted. Moreover, while those who made the rational principle—'Mind'—supreme were led to this conclusion by their study of the Cosmos, the exaltation of the irrational principle sprang from the observation of human life. It is certainly worthy of note that the religion of the Rational and the religion of the Irrational originated in the same period. The religious sentiment which, after the collapse of the old civic faith, was left in a state of flux begins to crystallize around two opposite poles. The two new types of religion were both destined to have a long history; and while we are going to deal with only one of them (for Philosophy would naturally tend to give its support to the rational principle), we should nevertheless bear in mind that it was the alternative type which had the stronger appeal to the greater number of people. Protests against 'Tyche' and efforts to restrict her domain are a characteristic feature of the Platonic, the Aristotelian, the Stoic, and even the Epicurean system.<sup>24</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* 1. 32-43. Cf. W. Jaeger in *Sitzungsber. d. Preuss. Akad.* (1926), pp. 69-79; *Paideia*, pp. 52, 141.

<sup>2</sup> See Xenophanes, *Frgs.* 11-6, 23-6 in Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Cf. James Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece* (Edinburgh, 1908), pp. 197-211; Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 168-73.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. George Thomson, *The Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 4, 18, 36 ff.; *The Oresteia of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1938), 1.5 f., 63. For Pindar see Hermann Fränkel, *Die Antike* 3 (1927). 39-63.

<sup>4</sup> Eur., *Iph. Taur.* 380-91. And see above, pp. 22 f.

<sup>5</sup> Eur., *Herc.* 1341-6.

<sup>6</sup> Eur., *Tro.* 914-1032.



7 For Metrodorus of Lampsacus see Diels-Kranz (see above, Note 2) 61, 3, 4. Cf. Plato, *Phaedr.* 229 c-e. For a somewhat different account of the history of allegorical interpretation see Jonathan Tate in *Class. Quart.* 23 (1929). 142-54; 24 (1930). 1-10. Cf. also Fritz Wehrli, *Zur Geschichte der allegor. Deutung Homers* (diss., Basel, 1928), p. 92.

8 Eur., *Bacch.* 286-97.

9 Eur., *Frag.* 480 in my own translation; *Hel.* 1137, tr. by Cornford.

10 Eur., *Tro.* 884-8. Cf. Nestle (see Chapter II, Note 10), pp. 147, 159, 161; Decharme (see *ibid.*), pp. 85 f.

11 See the works cited just above in Note 10, especially Decharme. For the divine quality of the human intellect in Euripides see also Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1. 26. 65.

12 It will be evident that I regard as doomed to failure any attempt to integrate the statements on the gods and the world-order which are scattered through Euripides' plays into something like a coherent *Weltanschauung*. Unless I am mistaken, attempts of the kind are no longer as fashionable as they were thirty or forty years ago. In matters of religion, no less than in political and social questions, Euripides' mind was open to any and every new theory, but his work as a whole reflects not a new religion or a new philosophy but rather the desire for one.

13 Eur., *Suppl.* 201-15. Theseus' γνώμη is πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς.

14 Aesch., *Prom.* 442-506. For Palamedes cf. Schol. Aesch., *Prom.* 457. Plato, *Rep.* 7. 522 d; Aesch., *Frag.* 182 and *Adesp.* *Frag.* 470 in A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*.

15 αὶ τέχναι probably comes nearest (πᾶσαι τέχναι βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως; Aesch., *Prom.* 506). For the reconstruction of these theories see Karl Reinhardt, in *Hermes* 47 (1912). 492-513, and Waldemar von Uxküll-Gyllenband, *Griechische Kulturentstehungslehren* (Halle, 1924). I agree with Reinhardt that Plato borrows his description of the origin of the State and of civilization in the former half of *Rep.* 2 from an earlier philosopher, but I cannot regard it as certain that this philosopher was Democritus (Reinhardt, *loc. cit.*, p. 504). For a critical discussion of Reinhardt's views see J. H. Dahlmann, *De philosophorum Graecorum sententiis ad loquellae originem pertinentibus* (diss., Leipzig, 1928).

16 Cf. Willy Theiler, *Zur Geschichte der teleologischen Naturbetrachtung bis auf Aristoteles* (Zürich, 1924), pp. 19-32. See also Theiler, pp. 32-6 on Xenophon, *Memor.* 4. 3.

17. 1. 4. 8; see also 1. 4. 6-17; 4. 3. 14. The teleological views of 4. 3 are distinctly anthropocentric. In spite of Theiler's arguments (see above, Note 16) I am far from sure that they go back to Diogenes. They are not 'scientific' in the sense in which Diogenes is a scientist.

18 Cf. Diels-Kranz 64 A 5, 7, 8, 19; B 4, 5. See also B 6 and cf. Simplicius' illuminating comments, *ibid.* Simplicius deserves confidence, since according to A 5 (*In Aristot. Phys.* 25. 1) he was familiar with Diogenes' work.

19 Aristoph., *Nub.* 264-6; *Ran.* 892; *Thesmoph.* 72. Cf. Eur., *Frag.* 330, 839, 877, 898, 911, 941.

20 See especially 64 B 3.

21 Cf. Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Monolog und Selbstgespräch in Neue Philosophische Untersuchungen* 2 (Berlin, 1926). 255-9; M. Pohlenz, *Griechische Tragödie* 1. 428-40.

22 *Bacch.* 395, 430, tr. by Gilbert Murray. My interpretation of the *Bac-*

*chantes* has some points in common with Jaeger's (*Paideia*, p. 352) and Schade-waldt's (*op. cit.*, pp. 137, 259).

23 See above, p. 43.

24 Plato, *Legg.* 10. 888 e ff.; Arist., *Metaph.* A 3. 984 b 14; *Phys.* B 6. 198 a 7-14; *De coel.* B 8. 289 b 25 ff.; *Eth. Nic.* A 9. 1099 b 24;  $\Delta$  3. 1124 a 13-6; *Stoic. Vet. Frag.* (ed. by Joannes ab Arnim, Leipzig, 1903-24) 1. 449; 3. 52; Epicur., *Epist.* 3. 131, 134.



## A VARIETY OF APPROACHES



## PLATO'S FIRST APPROACH: EXPURGATION

THE first Platonic dialogue in which religion is made a subject of discussion is *Euthyphro*. This is generally included in the earliest group of Plato's writings. It is certainly close in form and method to such works as the *Laches* and *Charmides*, and, just as in these, so here Socrates makes it his task to expose the weaknesses in, and lack of basis for prevalent notions about an important ethical concept. The concept actually under discussion in *Euthyphro* is piety (εὐσέβεια), but a few other concepts closely related to it also come in for examination and criticism. In particular, Socrates, towards the end of the dialogue, refuses to acquiesce in the conventional views of sacrifice and worship, and wonders what kind of benefit the gods are supposed to derive from them.<sup>1</sup> The reader will certainly agree that the commonly accepted notions concerning religion stand no less in need of revision than those concerning ethics and politics. But this is not all. Man's attitude to the gods is largely dependent on the ideas which he forms of their nature and activities, and Plato makes it clear that the conventional ideas and traditional stories are open to serious objections. Euthyphro is on the point of indicting his father before the Athenian authorities for an act of which he, the son, disapproves, and for this rather astonishing procedure he finds a religious sanction in the stories of Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus and their treatment of one another.<sup>2</sup> Their behavior is certainly at variance with the commonly accepted standards of family life and of the relation between parents and children, but Euthyphro proceeds on the assumption that what is right for the gods will also be right for human beings. The problem implied in his position is whether Greek mythology in its traditional form has a useful or a detri-

mental effect on morals, education, and communal life. We shall presently see that Plato will face and discuss this problem in the *Republic*; at the moment let us note that Socrates expresses definite uneasiness about the stories telling of discord, vengeance, and hostility among the gods: 'I cannot away with these stories about the gods. . . . Do you really believe that the gods fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists?'<sup>3</sup>

Another criticism points in the same direction. If the gods quarrel with one another and disagree among themselves about subjects as important as Justice and Injustice, how can human beings look to the gods for a standard of Justice? In other words, if the same confusion and uncertainty that are found among men prevail among the gods, how can they show man a way out of his confusion and uncertainty? The point is no more than touched upon,<sup>4</sup> but its mere mention indicates that the vital problem of moral standards can hardly be solved by reference to the established religion. In fact, Plato will not look to religion for standards, but rather will try to reform religion with the help of new standards drawn from his philosophical and philosophically elaborated system of values.

*Euthyphro* disturbs the peace of the orthodox. We should hardly expect Plato to have patience with the complacent exploiting of traditional religion for selfish ends. But, *Euthyphro* is tentative and, like *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, and other works of the same period, merely raises problems without giving more than hints on how a solution may be sought. Where will Plato take his stand in the battle raging over religion? We cannot as yet tell, though after reading *Euthyphro* we shall not be surprised to find Plato siding with the reformers of the mythical tradition.

It is only in the *Republic* that Plato definitely joins the ranks of the expurgators and reformers. Knowing the intimate connection in Greece between the State and religion, we are not astonished to find the discussion of religion within the context of political theory.

The criticism of the conventional religion and mythology at the end of Book 2 of the *Republic* forms part of a more comprehensive critical discussion of the various subjects which enter into the education of the young. It is the education of the 'guardians' which Plato seeks to regulate. Traditional subjects like religion, poetry, music, and gymnastics may retain their place, but their content has to be revised, and they will have to be taught in a different spirit. We may, for our purpose, leave out of account the specific reforms suggested in the first half of Book 3, but the comments which Plato makes on religion (or mythology), poetry, and music proceed from the same fixed point of view, and therefore shed light on one another.

A carefully chosen group will at a later stage in their lives receive training in the various branches of mathematics, and thus prepare themselves for the study of dialectic, the subject in which the whole curriculum will culminate. These few, then, will penetrate to the Forms and attain an insight into the nature of each of those fundamental moral and political values on which the structure of the whole State rests. The task requires special 'intellectual' talents and Plato is at pains to make clear what these 'philosophical' talents are.<sup>5</sup> The lines along which these philosophical studies shall be pursued are laid down in Book 7. In Books 2 and 3, while dealing with the educational function of religion, poetry, and music, Plato is thinking in much less intellectual terms; in fact he is not discussing 'intellectual' education at all. He is here concerned with the education of children, and with a type of education suitable for all the Guardians. Accordingly, many of those who pass through this kind of education will never be admitted to the higher and later stages described in Book 7 for the simple reason that their minds are not made for it. Consequently, the subjects suggested in Books 2 and 3 are of a different type from those recommended in Book 7. They are less abstract and intellectual, and their appeal will be far more to the imagination than to the reason. And yet the beneficial effect which Plato expects is, fundamentally, the same. While the philosophers will advance to perception and contemplation of the pure Forms of the virtues, the much larger



class of the future Guardians will meet the same virtues only as they are embodied in concrete characters and represented in the impressive medium of myth or poetry.

It is not an intellectual process, but a moulding of the mind. The minds of the young will be shaped by the topics and characters presented to them, by 'mythical stories in the most beautiful way designed for virtue',<sup>6</sup> which show the gods and heroes as models of moral perfection. The characters in myth and poetry should have the same virtues that are to be developed in the future guardians and rulers. They will impress their 'type'—the Greek word *τύπος* means at the same time type and impression—on the pliant minds of the children, whose natural tendency is to imitate actions which have impressed them. Indeed it is principally spontaneous imitation that Plato expects, and this whole phase of his system depends upon the assumption that the young will imitate what they hear, and that what they imitate and through constant imitation assimilate will finally be a part of their 'nature'. 'Did you never observe how imitations, beginning in early youth and continuing far into life, at length grow into habits and become a second nature, affecting body, voice, and mind?'<sup>7</sup> In this manner, the young will assimilate the virtues, the 'forms' of which are presented to them as concrete images in works of poetry, and also, though somewhat differently, in music: 'We shall never be musicians, neither we ourselves nor the guardians whom we propose to educate, until we know the essential forms of temperance, courage, liberality, and nobility of soul, and all their kin, and their opposites as well, and recognize them everywhere in combination, perceive their presence wherever they are found, both forms and images.'<sup>8</sup>

On this basis we can understand one criterion that Plato uses to discriminate between desirable and undesirable myths. Mythical tales are judged by their effect upon morals and by their educational 'usefulness' as well as by the criterion of 'truth'. To represent the gods as quarreling with one another and plotting against one another, is not useful. 'The young man should not be told that in committing the worst of crimes he is far from doing anything outrageous; and that even if he chastises his

father when he does wrong, in whatever manner, he will only be following the example of the first and greatest amongst the gods.' <sup>9</sup> Precisely this was the argument which Euthyphro adduced. How can the Guardians be expected to live at peace with each other, and to maintain harmony among the citizens, if the gods to whom they look as models of behavior fall short of the standards set for the city? We remember the slightly different turn given to the argument in *Euthyphro*: If the gods diverged from one another in their notions of Justice they would lend support to divergent notions among mortals. It would be idle to deny that a 'utilitarian' element comes into play: stories which are likely to have an adverse effect on the mentality of the citizens will in the end have an adverse effect on the 'well-being' and stability of the whole State. After all, the whole examination was begun in order to find 'how justice and injustice grow up in states'. <sup>10</sup>

As a rule, however, the criterion of usefulness is accompanied and in a way balanced by that of truth. It is neither useful nor true to talk of the gods as a source of evil.<sup>11</sup> The two points of view reinforce one another. We learn at the end of Book 3 that for the sake of usefulness, that is to say, where vital interests of the state are at stake, Plato would not refrain from telling lies, but it may be doubted whether he would go to the length of recommending for his ideal city a theology in which he did not himself believe. Nor is it difficult to see why the 'useful' and the 'true' coincide and point to the same conclusions. In revising the traditional views of the gods Plato is governed by the same values which constitute the highest entities in his hierarchy of ideas, form the core of his ethics, and are held capable of being realized in the character of his citizens. Plato has only one concept of perfection and excellent goodness; it is the same no matter whether applied to the gods, to politics, to education, art, or nature.<sup>12</sup> Therefore a teaching which represents the gods as good will be 'useful' to the citizens inasmuch as they will find in the divine characters models for their own conduct and goodness. In Plato's philosophy and in particular in his *Republic* all spheres of life are integrated, the idea of the Good providing

the norm and standard for each and at the same time the bond which unites them all.

'God is good' is the basic proposition laid down at the beginning of the discourse. No attempt is made to prove it. The two concepts simply belong together. It is unlikely that anyone in Greece would have questioned this. The conviction that God is good had been expressed before Plato and had been essential in Greek thought about the gods ever since the poet of the *Odyssey* opened his poem with the solemn declaration of Zeus that human beings are wrong to blame their catastrophes on the gods. Pindar's proclamation ('In truth it is fitting for man to tell of gods only what is of good report') and Aeschylus' identification of Zeus with Justice are important stages in the evolution of God as representative of the moral norm. 'I believe that none of the Gods is vile,' says Euripides.<sup>13</sup>

If the gods are good they will practise justice, live in harmony and peace with one another, not seek revenge, nor have any reason for seeking it. Once this concept is grasped a host of mythical tales are exploded; Homer's description of the habits prevalent in the divine family is seen to be impossible.

Further, if God is good he cannot wantonly do harm to anyone, in other words, he cannot logically be considered responsible for everything that happens to man, good and bad alike. It is consistent with supreme goodness to effect only the well-being of other creatures, to cause only what is pleasant and good in human experience. For misfortunes and sufferings a different cause will have to be found. A deeper understanding of the function of misfortunes in human life may reveal that there are blessing and benefit for the truly important phases of man's existence even in what seems unmitigated evil. Otherwise, either men themselves or, possibly, some other power must be held responsible for what is really evil.<sup>14</sup> Plato does not commit himself to any definite view on this subject; his aim here is not so much to define the source of genuine evil as to clear the gods of every responsibility for it and to confine their treatment of man to the production of what is good. If faced with the choice between the gods' impotence and their moral indifference—the

dilemma which in some form or other has confronted every theological approach to the problem of evil—Plato would rather limit their power than their goodness. Of Plato's 'Theodicea' we get but glimpses; no more than its outlines appear to be fixed. And yet he has clearly destroyed an argument which, earlier in this book, was adduced against divine Providence: the fact that good men fare badly while bad do well is no conclusive argument against either the gods' existence or their benevolent care of man.

All that has thus far been explained comes under the first 'form' (τύπος) of theology. The second 'form' excludes change, especially of shape, from the concept of God, and also declares ignorance, lies, and all manner of deception unworthy of divine beings. That the gods are in the 'most perfect state', need nothing they do not already possess by virtue of their very nature, is once more regarded as axiomatic. From this standpoint it becomes absurd to suppose that they should ever give up their normal status, which is unquestionably the best. Ignorance too cannot possibly have a place in the concept of divinity, since obviously, ignorance too would impair the fullness of their virtue and excellent goodness.<sup>15</sup> To understand this point we do well to bear in mind the importance of knowledge for the Socratic and Platonic concept of the Good.

That God should be simple, constant, and unchanging seems almost as important as that he should be good. For Platonic and, more generally, for Greek feeling, simplicity and oneness are of the nature of the good whereas picturesque manifoldness and the Greek word for it (ποικιλία) connote doubtful moral qualities.<sup>16</sup> For Plato, virtue (ἀρετή) is a unity, and therefore every virtue can be set up as 'one' idea, whereas vice is manifold. If a character is shown in more than one frame of mind, every step which leads away from simplicity will be a step in the direction of vice, passion, or some undesirable trait. And such multiplicity would be 'unsuitable to our State, in which there will be no two-fold or manifold man since everybody plays one part only.'<sup>17</sup> Poetry of the kind which shows a character passing, like an acrobat, through a succession of different moods, emotions, or

even situations, and thereby may cause a similar virtuosity on the part of poet, actor, and spectator will not be tolerated in Plato's State. Tragedy with its display of a variety of emotions is apt to arouse from sleep the manifold and complex monster of passions and desires in the soul of the spectator, and must for this reason be banned from the ideal state. Nor will picturesque and ecstatic harmonies be admitted. 'Simple music inspires temperance.'<sup>18</sup> What is condemned by Plato in all these instances is the element of picturesqueness, the diversity of colors and passions. The mind of the virtuous, morally eminent man is simple, unsophisticated, and uncomplicated. Naturally so, since the Idea which he approximates is itself also simple and uniform, in contrast to the plurality and diversity of particular objects. From this point of view, change, multiplicity, and passion must be considered incompatible with the divine nature.

Obviously this line of thought, if carried to its logical conclusion, would lead beyond common Greek polytheism to a monotheistic position. Actually, Plato repeatedly glides from the plural of the word 'god' into the singular.<sup>19</sup> He does not, however, provide a definite argument for the monotheistic position, nor does it seem to have been his intention to attack the traditional polytheism as such.

The target of Plato's criticism in Book 3 is the representation in Greek poetry not so much of the gods as of the heroes, but there can be no doubt that what we read about the worthy and unworthy conduct of heroes is applicable to the gods as well. It is emphasized, again and again, that the moulding of the guardians' character is the decisive test.<sup>20</sup> The gods and heroes, far from resembling their traditional representations in poetry, must be thought of as endowed with those admirable moral qualities which Plato is anxious to develop in the guardians. Their self-control must be complete. They cannot indulge in such undignified laments as they utter in Homer. They will not abandon themselves to unrestrained laughter, they will be superior to sexual passions, they will not be swayed by bribes and persuasion. Reason in them will be in undisputed command; the relation between their reason and desires obviously will correspond

to the ideal condition of the soul which we find described in Book 4. A catalogue of the qualities essential for the guardians is given in several places: at 395c we read that they should be courageous, temperate, holy, free, and the like; and similar or even fuller descriptions of their nature and conduct are found elsewhere. It is unthinkable that the gods or heroes should be lacking or imperfect in any of the qualities required of the 'brave man'. The educational function which Plato assigns to poetry and mythology is by no means fundamentally different from that which Homer's poems had long had. But the standards of human perfection embodied in the poetry of Greek heroism were different from those of Plato's political ethics.

The central concept of this ethics is still the old Greek ideal of 'the good' (*ἀγαθόν*) and of 'perfection', and it is precisely because Plato knows so much more about the 'good' that when he attacks the religious problem by expurgation he can go farther and arrive at more significant conclusions than anyone else who attempted the same thing.

We have already had occasion to comment on the picture of Greek religion which Plato draws in the first half of Book 2.<sup>21</sup> The point of it was that religion as understood and practised in his time can scarcely be regarded as a safeguard for justice. In that context, Plato refers (though somewhat casually) to three pernicious doctrines, the very ones that he will discuss at great length in the *Laws*: (1) that there are no gods, (2) that the gods do not concern themselves with human affairs, and (3) that the gods may be bought off by bribes and sacrifices. The contrast between the picture of a corrupted religion in the first half of the book and that of a true religion in the second half is too obvious and glaring to be ascribed to chance. In all probability, Plato wished the reader to be aware of it. Yet there is neither a systematic attempt to refute these pernicious doctrines, nor even a definite reference to them anywhere in the second part of Book 2 or the beginning of Book 3. Naturally if the gods have to be considered responsible for whatever is good in human life, that axiom disposes of the notion that they are totally indifferent to man; yet such is not the tendency of the argument in

the context where we read it. Again, exception is taken in Book 3 to lines and passages in Homer and Hesiod which represent gods and heroes as influenced by gifts; but this objection to the mythological tradition is preceded and followed by others of a similar kind, no great emphasis is thrown on it, and there is, again, no reference to the discussion at the beginning of Book 2.

In other words, while Plato insists that a corrupt or degenerate religion is no safeguard for Justice, his aim is not to show that true religion would serve as a safeguard. It has its importance, along with poetry, music, and gymnastics, as an instrument of education. If handled in the right fashion, religion will mould the minds of children into the proper and desirable form. But, far from restoring the old relation between the city and its gods and using that as a basis for his State, Plato provides an entirely new foundation. The new foundation is not religious; it is secular, rational, philosophical. The proper working of the political machinery will be guaranteed by the wisdom and insight of the philosopher-rulers who have attained knowledge of the Good and of other fundamental ideas and values, and have sufficient power to govern the city in accordance with their knowledge. For the philosopher, the source, standard, and criterion of good is not God, but the Idea of the Good. If anyone insists that Plato speaks of this Idea at the end of Book 6 with religious enthusiasm and in religious terms, he may with some right maintain that a religious element (of however new a type) enters into the construction of Plato's state. It will be seen, however, that Plato's philosophy of religion in its fully developed form does not include an identification of the gods with the Ideas. The truth is that in the political and educational scheme of the Republic religion and the gods occupy a plane below the highest. Like poetry, religion has a wider appeal than philosophy and the Ideas; and because of the quality of its subject matter, which even if no longer 'picturesque' is still concrete, it is serviceable in the education of a larger group. Many who could never grasp the Ideas themselves in the disciplines of mathematics and dialectic, will be influenced by the description of morally unimpeachable gods and heroes; but for those qualified for the more arduous task

religion, poetry, and music will be preliminary influences. In the educational program laid down for the élite the element of concreteness will be more and more reduced, the appeal to the senses more and more restricted, and in the end both will be almost eliminated.<sup>22</sup> But the larger group, the whole body of guardians, does not need philosophical culture. What they do need is the right state of mind, and this can be imparted to them if religion and poetry exhibit these same qualities—though, obviously, in a more sensuous medium—which the future rulers will finally perceive in their purest essence.

The philosopher-rulers will look upon the Ideas as *παράδειγματα*—models and perfect forms of the different virtues; for the majority of the guardians, the gods and heroes will have that role. The philosophers will know that the idea of the Good is the source of every particular good; most of the guardians will be ignorant of this cause, and will acquiesce in the belief that whatever is good comes from the gods. Plato by no means implies that they will be wrong. Book 10 of the *Laws* shows that even when the Theory of Ideas was fully developed, there was still room for the gods to bring about what is good. It might be said that the Ideas are the formal, the gods the efficient cause, and that as Aristotle would say the formal cause needs the efficient in order to be realized. But we had better avoid the use of Aristotelian terms and refrain from reading into the *Republic* what we find in the *Laws*. My reference to the *Laws* serves only to make clear that belief in the gods is not for Plato necessarily inconsistent with belief in the Ideas, even though the relation between them is neither in the *Republic* nor in the *Laws* made a matter of discussion.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Euth.* 14 e.

<sup>2</sup> *Euth.* 5 e-6 a. Cf. *Rep.* 2. 377 e-378 a. Parallels between these two discussions have, of course, frequently been noted. See, e. g., John Burnet, *Plato, Euthyphro, etc.* (Oxford, 1924), *ad loc.*; James Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge, 1902), *passim* in his notes on *Rep.* 2; W. A. Heidel, in *T. A. P. A.* 35 (1900). 166 and *passim*. The 'positive suggestions of doctrine' which Heidel finds in *Euthyphro* are not always convincing.

<sup>3</sup> *Euth.* 6 a-c.



4 *Euth.* 7 b.

5 See esp. *Rep.* 6. 484 d ff., 487 a, 503 b-c.

6 ὅτι κάλλιστα μεμνηθόλησθαι πρὸς ἀρετήν: *Rep.* 2. 378 e.

7 3. 395 d. Book 3, as is well known, is an important source for Plato's theory of imitation. It throws a great deal of light on the different meanings which *μίμησις* has in different contexts.

8 3. 402 c (tr. by Lane Cooper in *Plato: Phaedrus, Ion, etc.*, New York, 1938). 'Forms': εἶδη; 'image': εἰκών. εἶδη may well be understood in the sense which it has in the technical theory of Ideas, the explanation of which Plato reserves for later books. At the same time, it would make perfectly satisfactory sense for the uninitiated reader. For a different view see Adam, *ad loc.*

9 2. 378 b.

10 2. 368 e-369 a. Cf. 4. 427 d.

11 2. 380 b-c; cf. 3. 386 c. See Adam's notes *ad loc.*

12 Cf. Ernest Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, vol. 1: *Plato and his Predecessors* (London, 1918), p. 189 and Raphael Demos, *The Philosophy of Plato* (New York, 1939), p. 76.

13 Hom., *Od.* 1. 32; Pindar, *Ol.* 1. 35; Eur., *Iph. Taur.* 391; Plato, *Rep.* 2. 379 b.

14 2. 379 c-380 c; cf. 364 b.

15 2. 380 d-383 c. The gods do not deceive; see *Apol.* 21 b.

16 See the indexes to Pindar and Plato s. v. ποικίλος, ποικιλία. See especially *Rep.* 9. 588 c; 10. 604 e; also Eur., *Phoen.* 469 f.

17 3. 397 e.

18 3. 399 a-c. Cf. the discussion on rhythm, 399 e, 401 c.

19 2. 379 a ff., 380 c (a change from plural to singular in the same sentence), 381 b. For the element of 'polytheism' in Plato, cf. the recent controversy between A. E. Taylor, in *Mind* 47 (1938). 180 ff., and F. M. Cornford, *ibid.* 321 ff. See also Gustav E. Mueller in *Philos. Rev.* 45 (1936). 462 ff.

20 Cf. Lane Cooper, *Plato: Phaedrus, Ion, etc.*, pp. xlix, 279.

21 See above, p. 28.

22 Cf. especially 5. 475 d ff.; 7. 537 d. 3. 401 d ff. is also relevant to our discussion. A somewhat similar view is taken by R. L. Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London, 1925), pp. 80 ff.; Julius Stenzel, *Plato der Erzieher* (Leipzig, 1928), p. 127; Paul Friedländer, *Plato* (Berlin, 1928-30) 2. 367 f.

THE SECOND APPROACH: PHILOSOPHY OF  
MOVEMENT

PLATO's first approach to religion shows his thought dominated by the concept of ethical perfection. To rediscover the basic moral norms, and to indicate their relationship and intrinsic connection with one another, and especially with true Knowledge, had been his object from the very beginning. It was his conviction that there could be only one 'Form' of true justice, true courage, temperance, beauty, and the like, and that no physical object or human activity could embody to more than a limited degree any of these Forms. It was in pursuing this line of thought that he came to set up the political and moral values as eternal and unchanging Ideas, and to regard human effort and striving as ethical in the measure in which it approximated them. The task of human thought is to approach ever closer to an adequate understanding of the Ideas, that of human action to transform earthly actualities into ever closer resemblance to them. But this is a never-ending process, since the full accomplishment of either of these objects is beyond human power. The ideal State of the *Republic* is a model existing not on earth but somewhere in Heaven.<sup>1</sup> The emphasis in this phase of Plato's philosophizing seems to lie on the contrast between the absoluteness and perfection of the Ideas and the relativity and imperfection typical of all human efforts and institutions. At the same time, however, it is axiomatic with him that the Ideas are the only reality and the source of all other 'being'. Particular objects are, almost by definition, unreal or at best real in the degree in which they participate in the Ideas. If this is so, the isolation and transcendence of the Ideas, their remoteness from the sphere of what is commonly regarded as 'reality' was bound to become a

serious problem.<sup>2</sup> For if the norms and Ideas are completely cut off from the field of their realization, or if the physical world is utterly divested of value and reality, how will it be possible for the Ideas to become effective and productive, how can they influence and determine either the nature of the Universe or man's political activities?

Naturally, the world of Becoming and Change is in itself incapable of providing standards of reality or value, moral norms or criteria of True and False; for it lacks permanence and stability. In the first half of *Theaetetus* the philosophy of Becoming and the closely related philosophies of sensualism and individualism are for a while given free play—and the result is chaos. If allowed to proceed unchecked, they will sweep away every basis and standard of truth, destroy every vestige of substance and permanence, sap the identity of the human personality, and force every object out of its isolation into an interplay with others in which it ceases to exist by itself and can exist only in relation to something else. In the end these philosophies turn against themselves and destroy their own basis; for, according to their own line of argument, no theory, definition, or identification can claim more than a relative and therefore limited truth, which from a different, but equally legitimate point of view, may just as well be called falsehood.<sup>3</sup> When this turmoil has subsided we get into somewhat calmer water, but only to become entangled in the fallacies of empiricism and certain other theories which need not here be described. We should, however, realize that all through the dialogue important features of the theory of Ideas are deliberately ignored. Plato's object, especially in the first half of the work, is to point out where we arrive if we adopt the radical view for which Movement represents the basic principle of Reality. This is one extreme position; to focus philosophical interest entirely on the sphere of Rest and Permanence is the other.

*Parmenides* too exposes the philosophical failure and inadequacy of one-sided, alternative systems and shows how either of them leads to unsatisfactory, contradictory, and mutually destructive conclusions. Neither by merely positing nor by merely

denying the One can we ever arrive at a consistent philosophical system, at a system not fraught with fatally contradictory propositions.<sup>4</sup>

It seems clear that this whole set of dialogues, namely *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, *Parmenides*, and probably *Cratylus* too, originated from the tense conflict between the claims of the Philosophy of Being and the Ideas and the Philosophy of Becoming which assumes the reality of the Many, of physical phenomena. This if anything seems to be the *raison d'être* of these dialogues, for it is well to bear in mind that at this stage of Plato's philosophical development the dialogue was by no means the only or even the obvious vehicle for his philosophy. The form of Plato's philosophy is not the 'system' but the search for truth, nor is the dialogue always and necessarily the appropriate form of this search. Under particularly propitious circumstances, it may become so. The antinomy between Permanence and Change, Being and Becoming, was a truly 'dialectical' subject and therefore fit for exposition either in one dialogue (like *Parmenides* with its alternative theses as starting points for philosophical reasoning) or in a group of dialogues (like the trilogy in which *Theaetetus* is balanced by the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*).

The *Sophist* exhibits the theory of Ideas in a form in which they have outgrown their original stiffness and isolation and show themselves capable of entering into relation with one another, of grouping and regrouping in a kaleidoscopic variety of possible combinations.<sup>5</sup> In the middle part of this work Plato speaks more definitely than anywhere else about the need of effecting a synthesis between Being and non-Being, between the realm of Sameness, Permanence, and Rest and that of Becoming and Movement. The first realm had of course been represented in Plato's philosophy by the Ideas; but at the period of the *Sophist* a revision of his previous concept of Being appears to be necessary. For while he still considers Sameness, Rest, and Permanence essential qualities of Being, he also realizes that Life, Motion, Change, and Process cannot be absent from 'Being in its fullness'.

The first step towards this new theory is the recognition that

it is essential for a 'Whole' (ὅλον) to have parts; and since Being is closely and definitely tied to the concept of a 'Whole' and of intrinsic completeness and perfection, the same necessity applies to it. The only alternative would be to admit that there is no Being at all.<sup>6</sup> Thus it seems impossible to uphold the rigid doctrine that only the One exists and that the Many have no part in Being. The One itself, if it is to be an organic Whole, requires the existence of the Many as a *conditio sine qua non* for its own existence. Similarly—and this is Plato's next point—it must be realized that neither materialism nor the theory of Ideas contains the full truth about Reality. Each of them, if carried to its logical conclusion, requires the inclusion of the opposite principle in its concept of Being. The materialist will hardly be in a position to deny that living things are real; and if he makes this admission, he ought to be consistent enough to include the principle of life even though it is neither material nor perceptible in the list of those things which he allows to *be*.<sup>7</sup> Let us note that this principle of life is ψυχή. It is a matter of no small importance for the understanding of the later phase of Plato's theology that Soul is here recognized as a link and a means of transition between the material world and—something else. It helps both logically and ontologically to bridge the gulf between material and non-material reality. The same notion of ψυχή makes it possible in the argument immediately following to overcome the one-sided views of those who try to cultivate the eternal Forms in splendid isolation, cutting them off from all intercourse with the world of action, suffering, change, and becoming. Plato points out that as soon as we admit that the Ideas are grasped by the soul a connection is established between the Ideas and the soul which grasps them.<sup>8</sup> They act and are acted upon, no longer aloof from the realm of events and processes. Thus the Forms too are forced out of their isolation and become connected with the world in which they may display their productive power. 'I suggest that everything which possesses any power of any kind, either to produce a change in anything of any nature or to be affected even in the least degree by the slightest cause, though it be only on one occasion, has real existence. For I

set up as a definition which defines being that it is nothing else than power' either to act or to suffer. This is the new concept of Being which emerges from the discussion; and although we have rightly been warned (by Professor Cornford in his polemic against Whitehead<sup>9</sup>) that we have no right to regard this definition as final, we may properly remark that it includes a recognition of the 'dynamic', and that emphasis is now laid on an aspect of Being rather different from the permanence, perfection, and absoluteness which Plato formerly stressed. Movement, change, affectibility are notions which can no longer be considered incompatible with the Ideas. Things happen to them which 'we said do not happen to what is at rest'.

We are, however, still at the beginning of the discussion. Once the door is thrown open and the barrier between Being and Movement broken down, a number of other concepts demand their right; and, to Greek feeling at least, it seemed unnatural to keep these concepts rigidly separated from the notion of Being: 'For heaven's sake, shall we let ourselves easily be persuaded that motion and life and soul and mind are really not present to absolute being, that it neither lives nor thinks, but awful and holy, devoid of mind, is fixed and immovable?'<sup>10</sup> All these concepts are, in this context, obviously regarded as allied with 'movement' (*κίνησις*). That 'thought' may be classed with 'movement' was already apparent in the preceding argument to which we have given our attention—let us observe however that it is not so much the psychological process-character of thinking which justifies its inclusion in this class, as the fact that thought implies a contact and communion between the object of thought and the organ of thinking. In this passage it is suggested that if 'Being in its fullness' were something perfectly static it could not have a part in 'Mind'. A static world simply has no room for the activities of Mind. Mind (*νοῦς*) is an energy. Thus, just as the concept of a 'Whole' (or a 'One') implied the recognition of 'parts' (or 'Many'), the concept of Being, if Being in its fullness is intended, requires the recognition of Life, Movement, Soul and Activity, and especially the highest and worthiest activities, which are those of thought, in order to be self-sufficient and

complete. Otherwise, Being would not become actualized (or, as the English language has it, 'materialized'); it would be barren and dead, severed from enlivening contact with the world that is constantly renewed. It needs this world to display its power. If it does not act and produce it cannot even *be*. And yet, though Plato had, in his earlier works too, emphasized the productive capacity of the Ideas which were to inspire and direct all human actions which realize value, this vision of 'Being in its fullness' is something new.

To deny that the words 'Being in its fullness' <sup>11</sup> refer to the Cosmos seems futile unless it is regarded as axiomatic that Plato, where he is dealing with 'abstract' notions, must keep them in the sphere of abstraction—the very thing that he is anxious to avoid. If the Cosmos is the field where Eternity and Life may meet, it is only logical to think of the Cosmos in reading the passage cited. After all, Plato had shown no scruples about 'materializing' the 'Whole'. He would not easily allow himself to consign the Universe in its entirety to 'non-Being'. Cosmos means 'order' to the Greeks, and the qualities of order, structure, and fundamental harmony were never denied; nay they had already been emphasized by Plato in early dialogues: 'The philosophers say that heaven and earth and gods and men are bound together by communion and by friendship and orderliness and temperance and justice, and for this reason they call this Whole the world of Order (κόσμος), not disorder or misrule, my friend.' <sup>12</sup> If the Universe, then, exhibits so definite a triumph of order over disorder, of form and shape over shapelessness, of harmony over injustice, we can understand that it has to be taken into account by any theory of Being that pretends to be adequate. To glide, as Plato does in this discussion, almost imperceptibly and without a warning from one concept of Being (Being = Ideas) to another (Being = Cosmos) may for some readers look like begging the question. Yet Plato probably felt that a hearing on the properties of Being at which the just claims of the Cosmos were ignored could not be considered fair and impartial.

On the other hand, once the rights of Nature and the Universe are reinstated, the problem of the reality of Movement and of

the source of Movement becomes of fundamental importance. For without such a source Life would again come to a standstill, and if the disappearance or absence of Life means on the plane of the Ideas stagnation and barren abstractness, it spells on the plane of the Cosmos destruction and the complete annihilation of the Cosmos itself. 'So long as the heavens and the sun go round everything exists and is preserved, . . . but if the motion should stop, as if bound fast, everything would be destroyed and would, as the saying is, be turned upside down' is an argument which in *Theaetetus* supports a philosophy of Movement which Plato is far from upholding. But the argument appears in a similar form in both *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* as justifying an all-important role for the source of movement, and its reappearance in the context of these dialogues indicates that Plato found some truth in it and felt that it should not be ignored even by philosophers of the opposite school.<sup>13</sup>

We have in the *Sophist* become aware of the intimate connection between Movement and Mind or Thought. But Plato, immediately afterwards, goes on to point out that this approach too is one-sided and reminds us of the complementary aspect of Mind with which every reader of his earlier dialogues will be familiar. Plato does not think of abandoning his old proposition that the proper objects of thought are the unchanging objects. If everything is in constant flux, if there are no permanence and regularity, there will again be no room for Mind and thought, which can operate only if there are permanent objects exhibiting the quality of Sameness. Otherwise we shall be thrown back into the chaotic situation so vividly depicted in the first half of *Theaetetus* and it will be impossible to say anything of anything. In other words, we have once again been led into one of those dialectical dilemmas which are a typical feature of this set of Platonic dialogues. Fortunately, however, Plato this time shows us the way from the dialectical antinomy to the dialectical synthesis. Both movement and rest, things which are in motion and immovable, unchanging objects, have to be recognized by the philosopher. The new Platonic concept of Being includes both Movement and Rest (or Permanence) as the highest *genera* or



species of Being.<sup>14</sup> The fact that the realm of Being is divided into these two spheres does not at all imply that they are again isolated from one another in watertight compartments—even though it is true that in the *Sophist* their relation to one another is discussed in logical rather than in cosmological terms, and that the category of 'Difference', which is obviously meant to characterize their relationship, will also be included among the highest *genera* of Being (along with Rest, Motion, and Sameness).<sup>15</sup> The important fact is after all that Motion and Change have now been definitely rehabilitated as essential phases of Being. 'Physics', which is the application of the methods of true knowledge to the phenomena of Becoming, has thus been made possible. While *Theaetetus* (in its first part) showed the dangers and destructive results of a philosophy which makes Movement absolute, the *Sophist* assigns to it its true place: if Movement is regarded not as the only phase of Being but as one of two phases, it will no longer conflict with the essentials of true philosophy but may even be made useful to the necessary integration of a philosophical concept of Reality. A more comprehensive cosmological approach to 'Being in its fullness' will do justice to the element of Life and Change in the physical world, and will define its relation to the sphere of Permanence and unchanging Perfection in cosmic rather than in purely logical terms.

The philosopher may, then, add the Cosmos to his province. In fact, he is now in a position to round off his concept of eternal forms and eternal values, the reality of which remained problematic as long as they were not seen in action, as creative and truly formative principles, shaping the world in which Life goes on. We read in the *Republic* that the philosopher who acquiesces in the contemplation of the Ideas and does not reform actuality in accordance with his new and hard-won insight falls short of his task. To remain in the state of contemplation, however satisfactory it may be to himself, is only half the battle—or rather no battle at all. In the *Republic* this view is supported by references to the claims which the community has on every member, and the whole discussion is, naturally enough, carried on in political terms.<sup>16</sup> In the later form of Plato's philosophy we find

greater emphasis on the view that for the Forms, Numbers, and Realities themselves realization and contact with the 'world' are vital necessities. Life and Process become fundamental subjects of Plato's thought, requiring a vindication of their rights which only the eternal Realities can give them; but they in return can provide the eternal Realities with the *conditio sine qua non* of their existence, a theatre of realization.

We said above that through the recognition of Movement as one of the two phases of Being and of things in motion as one of the two subjects of genuine philosophy Physics has become possible—if Physics means the investigation of Movement and Change along the lines of true knowledge. A position has been reached from which the topics of generation, growth, change, and destruction which had engaged the minds of the Presocratics may be resumed. Moreover, it is now possible to assign to each individual problem that had been treated by them its proper place in the comprehensive system of changes, and to approach it with the intellectual tools available in this field. Investigation could thus become more systematic than it had ever been. It is not too much to maintain that Plato's philosophy of Change is historically the point of origin of scientific Physics.

The favorite method of Plato's later years was unquestionably *diaeresis*, the division of a genus into its species (kinds, forms, ideas) and of these again into subordinate species. We should therefore expect that this method was applied by Plato and the Academy to Movement as we know that it was in fact applied to a goodly number of other philosophically important notions such as the 'arts', imitation, the animals. As Being had been divided into Rest and Movement as its two highest 'species', and as the latter 'species' lends itself much more readily to further divisions and subdivisions than the former it would indeed be strange if the different kinds and 'Forms' of Movement had not been a subject of particular importance for the philosophers in the Academy. It must, however, be admitted that while a division of Movement into its two principal 'forms' already occurs in *Theaetetus* and while there are more or less casual enumerations in some other works of Plato's later period,<sup>17</sup> a really systematic

differentiation and a complete classification of movements are found only in Book 10 of the *Laws*, and it is there that the examination of all possible movements leads to the realization that the first and most perfect of all movements must be the spontaneous and eternal movement of Soul, the only movement that does not presuppose any prior cause to account for its existence. On the other hand, almost every dialogue of this period includes some contribution to the theory of movement and thus reveals the important place which it occupied in Plato's thought. *Cratylus* is less philosophic and profound than *Theaetetus*; but it contains the interesting thesis that if words suggest anything about the nature of things and of Being, some of them suggest Rest, others Flux as their fundamental principle. The philosophy of Heraclitus is under examination in *Cratylus* as well as in *Theaetetus*.<sup>18</sup> The refutation in this latter dialogue of the extravagant claims made for the philosophy of Movement, and the admission of Movement in the *Sophist* to a position on a par with Rest and Sameness have already been discussed. The *Statesman*, which completes the trilogy of which *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* form parts, includes the important theory of a deterioration of Movement that increases in the measure of its distance from the original perfection; it is understood as a progressive loss of regularity and sameness. In *Phaedrus* Plato develops a most impressive and elaborate argument for the immortality of the Soul; its basis is the thought that no movement that is not self-generated can be eternal, and that all temporary movements and everything that is in a state of change and Becoming point to an eternal source of all Movement and Becoming. If this source were absent, or if it ceased to exist, the whole Universe would for ever pass out of existence—an appalling but fortunately impossible supposition.<sup>19</sup> Movement and some of its species are also among the concepts which are examined in *Parmenides* with a view to clarifying their relation to the One as well as to the Many. Passing to *Timaeus*, we find Plato assigning to the World-Soul (which is the source of Movement) a definite place and function in the Universe and attempting to define her relation to the other movements in the physical world. Finally the *Laws* includes the most elaborate

classification of movements, and this classification culminates again in the recognition of the cosmic Soul as the source both of the first and of the most perfect movement. But we cannot yet attempt to study either this classification or the Theology which Plato builds on it. We shall give our attention to these two subjects in Chapter VIII. At present, it is enough to say that by rehabilitating Movement Plato opened up a new avenue of approach which was to lead him to important discoveries concerning the nature of the divine principle.

The myth of the *Statesman* embodies certain particularly important features of Plato's new theory of Change. Let us study some of them. In the very first sentence, it is pointed out that Sameness and unvarying identity with themselves are the privilege of 'the most divine of all things,'<sup>20</sup> whereas the Cosmos has a 'body'—which implies change, lack of regularity, and a degree of disorder. We find a reference to the original and divine source of all movements, where it is said that its movement must be the same for ever. All particular and secondary changes in the Universe (including those by which human beings are affected) are regarded as the results of changes in the Whole. In the measure of their distance and remoteness from the divine source of movement, changes of and in the Universe become increasingly confused and disorderly; the element of *τάξις*, Order and Regularity, gradually decreases. Similar and indeed fundamentally identical ideas about the changes and movements in the Cosmos will be found in *Timaeus* and in Book 10 of the *Laws*, though it is characteristic of the later stage of Plato's philosophizing that the same basic conceptions may combine in slightly different ways and form slightly different patterns (this may be observed especially when Plato's thought turns on the interactions between Being and Becoming). To revert to the myth in the *Statesman*, we gather from it that the condition of Sameness and complete order which the Universe enjoyed in the era of divine control had its shortcomings as well as its advantages over the present condition in which Order and Disorder are assumed to be mixed and the purely physical to be at war with the 'good'. It is suggested (or at least hinted) that Philosophy and the State will emerge only

in the period of Change. Were the blessings of the era of Cronus really the greatest blessings, asks Plato with an undertone of scepticism.<sup>21</sup> In any case, change and even deterioration are essential phases of Reality. As we have already seen, the philosopher who confines his attention to the Permanent and Unchanging misses a great deal, and cannot arrive at an integrated picture of the world.

Since Plato's interest is now divided between the realms of Permanence and of Change we need not be astonished if we find him giving particular attention to that phase of the Cosmos in which Nature herself exhibits the qualities of Regularity and Constancy, embodying an element of Sameness and Perfection in the context of change. The heavenly bodies are in motion, and yet their movements are uninterrupted, not being subject to change or to any disturbing influence. They are regular and identical with themselves. Moreover they are reducible to and may be expressed in numbers. The ways of the planets and the periods covered by their revolutions form a pattern of beautiful numbers and proportions. We do not know to what extent the Academy had lived up to Plato's suggestion, put forward in the *Republic*,<sup>22</sup> that not so much empirical observation but philosophical insight into the structure of the realm of mathematical entities should supply the numbers and numerical relations which are to be used in determining the ways of the heavenly bodies and their relation to one another. We need not doubt, however, that the new material that was added to Academic knowledge on this subject only served to confirm Plato in his conviction that inviolable eternal laws governed the movements of the heavenly bodies, and that simple numbers, beautiful and perfect shapes and proportions were the clue to the whole science of celestial phenomena. Tradition has it that Plato's friend, the great mathematician Eudoxus, visited Egypt; and from Egypt as well as from Babylon the Academy must have received a considerable amount of new astronomical information. Astronomical observation in these countries extended over periods much larger than any ever covered by Greek observations and records. In the *Laws* Plato mentions with the greatest satisfaction that he has only in ad-

vanced years been cured of the belief that the planets 'erred', that is, performed irregular movements.<sup>23</sup> Obviously, it was evident from the material brought home by Eudoxus that the movements of the so-called planets were regular and recurrent, governed by laws, and determined by Sameness. That information probably also helped to decide the geometrical pattern of their movements. Thus the firmament represented to Plato a triumph of mathematics, numbers, proportions, and figures over the realm of change. And to Plato's mind there was nothing more akin to the nature of the Ideas than numbers, and nothing more revealing of the relationship between ideas than the relations and proportions of simple numbers. This has been conclusively shown by recent research.<sup>24</sup> It is not possible for me here to go deeper into this very involved subject; it will suffice to bear in mind that numbers as well as Ideas were to Plato an object not of the senses but of pure thought and that they existed for him independent of and prior to particular, visible objects. Their reality is of the same kind as that of the Ideas, and the relations obtaining among numbers came to be regarded as a model when Plato turned his attention to the problem of relationships and connections among various Ideas.

It may not be wrong to think that the discovery of regularity and 'Sameness' in the visible firmament made Plato more sympathetic towards an astronomy whose subject was the actual ways of actual heavenly bodies and which discovered through empirical observation regularities and relationships as beautiful and perfect as those set up by aprioristic thought. But, whether or not this is true, the fact that there was Sameness, Regularity, and Perfection right in the movements of the actual Cosmos must have confirmed him in his intention to incorporate the realm of Movement in his new and integrated concept of Being. The new information and the development of his philosophy pointed in the same direction. The heavenly bodies moving as they were now known to move represented an element of Being in the world of Becoming, showed Sameness and Identity triumphant over Difference, Constancy over Change. For this reason they hold a unique position in that whole field of Becoming where

Change, confusion, and uncertainty dominate and the pattern of numbers is blurred. They form a link—not so much a logical as an actual, cosmic, and ontological link—between the spheres of the two highest *genera* of Being. Here and only here does Being with its order, harmony, and form break visibly into the disorderly theatre of conflicting and, mathematically and aesthetically, much less perfect movements. All other movements point to this harmonious movement as their norm and perfection (and also, we shall presently see, as their source), but in the measure of their distance from it they have suffered loss of order and regularity and thus exhibit the mathematical principle in much less undisputed sovereignty.

The order and sameness in the movements of the heavenly bodies presuppose for Plato the presence of Mind (*νοῦς*), since Sameness, Permanence, and constant identity are the work of Mind. Where Nature is left to itself these qualities will be absent inasmuch as the elementary forces are not by themselves capable of producing them. Order, Law, and Harmony cannot spring from purely physical causes devoid of Reason. They presuppose Reason and a reasonable principle. Mind rises above chaos and irregularity; it cannot express and manifest itself in an erring, fluctuating manner, nor does it change at every juncture the principle of its operations. The most beautiful measures, proportions, and movements are those of Mind itself—it is altogether preposterous to see in them the work of the blind, elementary forces of uncontrolled Nature. It is for Mind to organize both the kingdom of Being and that of Becoming, and Mind does so through Number and Harmony, the instruments of beautiful design.<sup>25</sup> These impart to the Universe as much perfection as it is capable of admitting.

Every movement is change, but in regular and eternal movements Change coincides with Sameness, and alteration loses its arbitrary character and attains a quality of perfection. The movements of the heavenly bodies caught Plato's particular interest as 'perfect movements'. But he would be no less interested in the first movement, the source of all others. The perfect movement is obviously the first—in order of value, and for this reason

Plato would be apt to regard it also as the first in order of existence, and to consider the same principle responsible for the harmonious and most beautiful movements and for the origin of Movement, Change, Life generally. The principle which fulfills these two functions is Plato's God. At least, it represents the Platonic conception of the Deity in the form in which it would suggest itself to him in the context of his theory of movements.

What is the nature of this Platonic God and by what name will he call him? We have seen that for Plato Mind cannot be absent from the realm of Order, Regularity, and Sameness. But Mind (*νοῦς*) lacks the right kind of contact with the world of Flux, Life, and Becoming. Mind contemplates the eternal order and the immutable Ideas. Mind is constructive; Mind may act as builder and architect designing the structure of the Universe,<sup>26</sup> but Mind cannot beget Life. What was required to effect the transition to the realm of Becoming was a principle which, in addition to being closely allied to Mind and like it oriented towards the eternal Sameness and supersensual entities, could also serve as a principle of Life, generating, inspiring, and maintaining the restless, unceasing motion and change which go on in the physical world and without which even the realm of pure Being would stand condemned to an existence of barren unreality.

No concept in the whole range of Plato's philosophy was so fit to serve in all these functions as the concept of Soul (*ψυχή*). For Soul had always been conceived by Plato as immortal, by nature akin to and in communion with the Ideas, numbers, and whatever is permanent and 'in the same state for ever.' On the other hand, he had also seen in it the principle of Life which animates the otherwise dead body, ruling over it and governing and directing even physical activities. We know these functions of Psyche especially from *Phaedo*.<sup>27</sup>

In *Phaedrus* Plato with great emphasis proclaims 'Soul' as the source of all movement.<sup>28</sup> If we had to form our picture of the latter stage of Plato's philosophy solely on the basis of this dialogue, we might in view of the mythical context in which we read this doctrine hesitate to take at its face value Plato's in-



sistence on the fundamental importance of Psyche. The priority of Soul is, however, confirmed by Book 10 of the *Laws* and by sections of *Timaeus*. The proof in *Phaedrus* and in Book 10 of the *Laws* rests on the contention that unless there were a first source of movement, and unless this were eternal, self-generating, and completely independent, Life would come to a standstill. We have already seen (above, p. 81) what the disappearance of Life in the Cosmos would mean. Thence Plato proceeds to identify the principle of Life with Soul (Psyche), asserting that the presence of Soul accounts for the difference between a dead and a living object.

The distinction between Body (*σῶμα*) and Soul (*ψυχή*) must have been a basic dogma of the Greek mystery-religions. Orphic, Pythagorean, and Empedoclean speculations about man's fate after life, about transmigration, salvation, and redemption must have centred upon the concept of Soul.<sup>29</sup> Such beliefs implied for this life the duty of keeping free from stains and pollutions, and as soon as the concept of purity was understood by the Greeks in moral rather than in purely ritualistic terms it constituted an important contribution to Greek ethics. Plato carried on these speculations, incorporating them in mythical form in the concluding sections of such dialogues as *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*. At the same time he also introduced the concept of *ψυχή* into the secular and political phase of his philosophy, made Soul the locus of his political virtues and the organ of man's approach to the true realities, and assigned to it a central place in his epistemology. This was a new and revolutionary departure bound to be epoch-making in the history of the concept. All this, however, had already been achieved in the period of his thought which, roughly speaking, comes to a close with the *Republic*, and we are now concerned with his second contribution, which we find in his later dialogues. Here Soul is described and treated as the source of movement, process, and change in the Cosmos, as the principle of Order, Form, Law, Symmetry, Permanence in the otherwise chaotic world of physical events, as the mediator between the realms of Being and of Becoming. This second

contribution seems as revolutionary and as important as the first.

In a passage very near the end of the *Laws* Plato looks at his own philosophy of religion and nature from a surprisingly historical point of view.<sup>30</sup> As an approximation to a historical approach to the development of thought, the passage is probably unique in the whole range of Plato's work. In contrast with his exposé in Book 10 of the *Laws*, where previous systems of nature were branded as entirely materialistic, Plato here recognizes that even earlier thinkers (probably Anaxagoras in particular) had not failed to note the wonderful accuracy and elaborate mathematical precision of the processes in the firmament and had been driven to conclude that Mind was at work in the Universe. 'Even in those days [the early days of science] men wondered about them, the sun and the stars, . . . and even at that time some ventured to hazard the conjecture that Mind (*voûs*) was the orderer of the universe.' And yet the same thinkers, he continues, made themselves guilty of completely misunderstanding the nature of Soul and its place in the Cosmos. They did not realize that it takes precedence over crude matter. Thus the Universe, though governed by Mind, remained for them devoid of Life. That Soul and the movement of Soul come first and that every other movement in the physical world is dependent on them is in fact Plato's great new discovery, pronounced and proved in *Laws* 10 with the full emphasis befitting so revolutionary an idea. Plato felt keenly that it struck at the roots of all previous cosmological systems. Nature now becomes alive—truly alive as something more and better than a shadow or copy. At the same time, it becomes divine, because its life flows from a source which is eternal, rational, perfect, and good. In a sense Nature had long, perhaps always, been alive and divine to the Greeks; but its divine quality is now restored to it on a higher and philosophical level. As long as Plato, in the period of his preoccupation with political and moral problems, looked at physical processes merely as instances of 'Becoming' and spoke of passing and fleeting phenomena in a more or less derogatory fashion, Nature received less than its due. Other phases and aspects of the Greek concept of Nature are

recognized here and there in general terms even in Plato's earlier works, but only the new approach of his later years did them full justice.

The modern historian of philosophy may wish to insist that even for the Presocratic thinkers Nature was by no means dead and that the divine quality of the Cosmos is fully recognized in their systems. Does not Plato himself cite Thales' 'Everything is full of gods,' endorsing it wholeheartedly? There is Life in Heraclitus' Flux, and God is in the World, being 'day, night, winter, summer, war, peace'.<sup>31</sup> Nor would the theories of Xenophanes, Parmenides, Empedocles be adequately described by the words which Plato uses in *Laws* 10 and 12. Some Presocratics even appear to have thought of the Cosmos as something like a living organism.<sup>32</sup> But Plato's concept of 'Soul' is much richer as it includes besides the elements of Life and Divinity (to which he gives a new prominence) also those of goodness and rationality. In addition, an order of ontological precedence and cosmic priority has now been established for the spiritual and the material in the Universe, and the whole theory of Nature has accordingly been revised with great energy.

Thinkers before Plato who believed with Anaxagoras in a divine Mind as orderer of the Universe identified the ether with this god and proceeded, it seems, to describe the ether as the begetter of life. With this explanation they could do justice to the element of life as well as to the order of the Universe. For Plato, however, it was impossible to identify the principle of life with any material principle, even with the ether. Aristotle restored to the ether some of the functions which Plato had given to 'Soul'.<sup>33</sup>

Plato's God is not an Idea nor are his Ideas gods. We are likely to miss the peculiar character of his theology unless we realize that the place of his god is on the boundary between Being and Becoming. He is the principle through which the physical world of Becoming partakes of the qualities of Being. Thanks to the work of Soul (and of Mind as its auxiliary) there is in the visible world something that is 'in the same state for ever' or 'behaves always in the same fashion' (κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὡσαύτως). As a result, human beings who are eager to strengthen the eternal and divine

part of their souls and to overcome the turmoil and conflict of their passions are helped by contemplating the ways of the heavenly bodies as well as by contemplating the Ideas themselves.<sup>34</sup> In respect of harmony, regularity, and identity with themselves the motions of the heavens are not inferior to the Ideas, though it is in keeping with the general trend of the development of Plato's thought that this educational value of astronomical studies is stressed in such late works as *Timaeus* and the *Laws* (as well as in the *Epinomis*). The benefit inherent in this kind of 'assimilation' is precisely the same as that flowing from an assimilation of the human mind to the Ideas.

'The soul in her totality has the care of inanimate being everywhere, and traverses the whole heaven in divers forms appearing:—when perfect and fully winged she soars upward, and orders the whole world—' <sup>35</sup> whereas the status of individual human souls is less exalted. Later in the myth in *Phaedrus* the experiences of individual human souls dominate the discussion and we seem to lose sight of the activities and functions of the World-Soul. Yet the break in the subject is apparent rather than real; for the primacy of the World-Soul implies that even on the cosmic stage the experiences and the fate of souls are more important than anything else. This is more clearly brought out in the *Laws*, but should be borne in mind also for the interpretation of *Phaedrus*. After all, 'Soul in her totality has the care of inanimate being everywhere.' The primacy of Soul in the world of change and the fact that within this world of change she represents the element of eternity are stressed in the proof of her immortality, which as a kind of prelude is placed before the mythical description of the experience and fate of human souls. The relation between individual souls and the World-Soul is not made perfectly clear, but we may either assume that they are parts of the universal Soul or at least regard them as of the same stuff.

In the same myth the old gods (Zeus, Hera, Ares, and the other Olympians) are introduced in a new role. The individual souls before losing their wings and suffering incorporation take part in the rotation of the firmament; this process is described in the myth, and we may understand, on the basis of another myth

in *Timaeus*, that each soul inhabits a star.<sup>36</sup> Each soul belongs to one definite part (i. e., sign) of the zodiac and each of these parts is presided over by one of the Olympian gods. It is assumed that the individual souls correspond in character, nature, and outlook to the god to whose following they belong. They retain this character even when they are imprisoned in human bodies and launched on their earthly life.<sup>37</sup> Thus the relation between human individuals and the Olympian gods takes on a new character. We may call it an astrological character though we are dealing not with astrology of the technical type, but with a philosophical attempt to understand the diversity of human souls and characters in cosmic terms. A soul that has belonged to the 'sign' of which Zeus is in charge is a 'Jovial' character, the followers of Hera resemble her, and so on. Plato makes the further point that each man chooses his beloved from the followers of the same god with whom he himself is connected. In its more philosophical-minded representatives later Greek astrology has a good deal in common with this Platonic concept which brings the traditional gods into a new relationship with man, and at the same time stresses man's bond with that part of the Cosmos where Soul is primarily at home and at work.

The Ideas too are credited with a very important role in this myth, and we may here learn how different their status is from that of the World-Soul, although they share with her the characteristic feature of eternal existence. While Soul sustains the life and movement of the Cosmos, the Ideas are outside the Cosmos in the 'place above the heavens'.<sup>38</sup> They are remote from and unaffected by the realm of change and strife. Yet the individual souls 'feed' on the Ideas. It is the nature of soul to look to the Ideas and to be guided by them, and the more perfect the condition of a particular soul the more exclusively will her course of action be determined by her recollection of the Ideas. But there is in the myth in *Phaedrus* no discussion of the relation between the World-Soul and the Ideas. That the World-Soul has in common with the Ideas more than the quality of eternity and that she imparts to the world of flux regularity, harmony, and

reason can hardly be inferred from *Phaedrus*. We learn this rather from *Timaeus* and Book 10 of the *Laws*.

## NOTES

1 *Rep.* 9. 592 b.

2 For an excellent account of this difficulty, which is considerably more complex than I can here indicate, see Julius Stenzel, *Plato's Method of Dialectic* (tr. by D. J. Allan, Oxford, 1940), pp. 44 ff.

3 *Theaet.* 170-1, 181-3. Cf. Harold Cherniss in *A. J. P.* 57 (1936). 454.

4 This is hardly the place to discuss at length the various recent interpretations of *Parmenides*. For a list of them see the Preface to F. M. Cornford's *Plato and Parmenides* (London, 1939), to which should be added Stenzel, *Metaphysik des Altertums in Handbuch der Philosophie* (München, 1934) 1. 129-39 and Harold Cherniss in *A. J. P.* 53 (1932). 122-39. My point is that the 'form' of the second part of *Parmenides* may be understood in the light of other works, sections of works, and even trilogies of the same period in which one partial view is balanced by another so as to make us realize the unsatisfactory nature of both. See the analysis of a section of the *Sophist* on the next pages. I agree with Auguste Diès, *Autour de Platon* (Paris, 1927) 2. 480 and with Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1934), p. 12, but not entirely with Cornford's interpretation of *Parmenides* (*op. cit.*; see above). See E. R. Manasse, *Plato's Sophistes and Politikos. Das Problem der Wahrheit* (Berlin, 1937) and Mrs. M. G. Walker's valuable paper, 'The One and the Many in Plato's *Parmenides*', *Philos. Rev.* 47 (1938). 488-516.

5 For the *Sophist* cf. Stenzel, *op. cit.* (see above, Note 2), Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, and also, for some points that I am going to make, Phillip H. De Lacy, 'Causation in Plato's Philosophy', *Cl. Ph.* 34 (1939). 109.

6 *Soph.* 244 d-245 e. For the alternatives see 245 c-d. Cf. Cornford, pp. 222 ff., esp. 227 f. Cornford rightly notes that in this section we are keeping close to the discussion of *Parmenides*. Cf. Taylor, *Plato* (3rd ed., London, 1937), p. 383, n. 2; Cherniss in *A. J. P.* 53 (1932). 122 ff., 127.

7 *Soph.* 246 e-247 c. If the materialists admit the reality of 'Soul' they will also admit the reality of certain ethical qualities such as Justice.

8 *Soph.* 248 c f. The identification of reality ( $\tau\acute{o} \delta\upsilon\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma \epsilon\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota$ ) with the possession of some power ( $\delta\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ ) to act or be acted upon (247 d f.) has its bearing on this argument and constitutes a kind of meeting-ground for the antagonistic schools. As to the 'friends of the forms' I agree with almost everything that Professor Cornford says about this point, especially with his remark (p. 243), 'Plato knew well enough that his own theory of Forms was by far the most important product of the idealistic tradition.'

9 *Soph.* 247 d f. (tr. by H. N. Fowler, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1921). Cornford, *op. cit.*, pp. vii, 234 ff., 238; A. N. Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas* (London, 1933), p. 165.

10 *Soph.* 248 e-249 a, tr. by Fowler.

11  $\tau\acute{\omega} \pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta\upsilon\tau\iota$ ; 248 e. Cf. Cornford, pp. 244 f. Manasse (see above, Note 4), p. 12, takes a different view.

12 *Gorg.* 507-8.

13 *Theaet.* 153 d, tr. by Fowler; *Phaedr.* 245 d-e; *Legg.* 10. 895 a, where the argument is given a somewhat different turn.

- 14 *Soph.* 249 c-d.
- 15 *Soph.* 254-5.
- 16 *Rep.* 7. 519 c-520 d, 540 b.
- 17 *Theaet.* 181 c; *Parm.* 138 b; cf. *Crat.* 439 e. *Tim.* 34 a is different.
- 18 See especially *Crat.* 401 d, 439 c. Cratylus is a Heraclitean.
- 19 *Phaedr.* 245 c-246 a. For the other works see pp. 76 ff., 85 f.
- 20 *Polit.* 269 d. James Adam, *The Republic of Plato* 2. 295 ff., holds that the doctrine of this myth agrees completely with Plato's 'doctrines' in other dialogues, whereas Taylor (p. 396) refuses to take the cosmology of the myth at all seriously. I cannot accept either of these extreme views. Cf. in general Luigi Stefanini, *Platone* (Padua, 1932-35) 2. 273 f.
- 21 *Polit.* 272 b ff.
- 22 *Rep.* 7. 528 e-530 c. I have taken to heart Shorey's warning (*What Plato Said*, p. 236; cf. also *Procead. Philos. Assoc.* 66 [1927] 172 f.), but must insist that Plato here repudiates an empirical approach to astronomy.
- 23 Cf. Plato, *Legg.* 7. 821 a-822 c and *Simplic.*, in *Arist. de coelo* 488. 19. For Eudoxus see Strabo 17. 29, 30; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* 7. 2; Diog. Laert. 7. 1. 87. For evidence of information received from Egypt and Babylon see *Epin.* 987 a and *Arist. de coelo* B 12. 292 a 9. Cf. Erich Frank, *Plato und die sogenannten Pythagoreer* (Halle, 1923), pp. 34, 201-5; Jean Bidez' important paper in *Acad. Royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres* (1933) has unfortunately been printed without notes, but see pp. 199 ff.
- 24 See J. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt in Plato und Aristoteles* (Leipzig, 1931). For the place of 'regular movement' in Plato's philosophy and for the coincidence therein of Sameness and variety, cf. Joseph Moreau, *L'Âme du monde de Platon aux Stoïciens* (Paris, 1939), pp. 75 ff. and Luigi Stefanini (see above, Note 20), 2. 348.
- 25 For these functions of *voûs* see esp. *Phaed.* 97 b ff.; *Soph.* 265 c; *Phileb.* 28 d-e, 30 c; *Legg.* 10. 897 b ff.; 12. 966 e ff. See also the comments on *Timaeus* below, p. 112. *Epin.* 982 a-c is close to Plato's own thought. R. C. Lodge, 'Mind in Platonism', *Philos. Rev.* 35 (1926). 201-20, discusses 'Mind' in its relations to movement, but rather 'as we now understand the matter' than as Plato understood it.
- 26 See below, p. 112.
- 27 Cf. esp. *Phaed.* 105 c ff. with Burnet's notes; *Rep.* 10. 611.
- 28 *Phaedr.* 245 c ff. Cf. John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy* (London, 1914) 1. 334. See also Pierre Bovet, *Le Dieu de Platon d'après l'ordre chronologique des dialogues* (thèse, Genève, 1902), pp. 127 ff. (see above Ch. II, Note 27) and J. Moreau's excellent new book (see above, Note 24).
- 29 See Chapter VII.
- 30 *Legg.* 12. 967 a-c.
- 31 Cf. Hack (cited above, Chapter II, Note 27). For Heraclitus cf. Hermann Fränkel in *T. A. P. A.* 69 (1938). 230-45. Thales is quoted in *Legg.* 10. 899 b.
- 32 Cf. on this point Diès, *op. cit.* (Note 4, above) 2. 536.
- 33 See above, p. 52. For the function of the ether in Aristotle cf. Moreau, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
- 34 See, e. g., *Tim.* 47 c, 90 c; *Legg.* 12. 967 e. Cf. the great importance attached to 'number' and astronomy in the *Epinomis* (976 e ff., 982 ff., 986 a ff., 988 a ff.). In spite of the efforts of A. E. Taylor and K. Raeder to establish the genuinely Platonic character of the *Epinomis*, I still agree with Werner Jaeger, Friedrich Mueller, Willy Theiler, Benedict Einarson, and others in regarding Philippus of Opus as the author of the work. For references to recent studies

see Einarson in *A. J. P.* 61 (1940). 65 ff.; see also Einarson's paper in *T. A. P. A.* 67 (1936). 261-85.

35 *Phaedr.* 246 b.

36 *Phaedr.* 247-8; *Tim.* 41 d ff. Cf. Bidez, *loc. cit.* (Note 23, above), pp. 287-90.

37 See especially *Phaedr.* 252 e-253 c.

38 *Phaedr.* 247 c. Cf. Gustav E. Mueller's comments on this relationship between the gods and men in 'Plato and the Gods', *Philos. Rev.* 45 (1936). 467.



## THE TELEOLOGICAL APPROACH

WE UNDERSTAND Plato's concept of the divine World-Soul as an attempt to establish continuity between Being and Becoming, to link the world of Flux with that of Sameness and to combine both into an integrated theory of Reality. But while Plato knows only one concept of Being, the synthesis of Being and Becoming may be achieved in several different ways. Becoming itself is a chameleon-like thing; the Many are shadowy and fluctuating, and when they enter into communication with the One the synthesis that results is bound in some measure to partake of their unstable nature and to reflect their oscillating quality. Thus we find Plato in different contexts constructing different avenues from the realm of permanent entities into that of physical processes. To take stock of the 'changes', to reduce them to a system is one way of making them participate in Being. In *Timaeus* the method suggested is that in which the particles of the material elements are composed of solid regular bodies such as cubes and pyramids, and these in turn are resolved into geometrical triangles.<sup>1</sup> It is hinted that this process, if continued, would lead beyond the realm of figures into that of numbers, and we know that numbers represent the Forms. What is thus achieved is again a kind of continuity between material, less material, and completely immaterial objects. In other words this procedure serves as another rather elaborate method of bridging the gulf between Physics and the kingdom of eternal Being. For while the starting point lies in the latter realm the 'way' ends in the construction of the atoms of the four elements whose particular geometrical structure will be used to explain the various phenomena and processes in the realm of Physics. The concepts of 'right measure' (μέτρον) and symmetry,

as developed in the *Statesman* and *Philebus*, provide criteria for the value of concrete things. For things—especially objects or products of ‘art’—are ‘good’ in the degree to which they partake of these qualities.<sup>2</sup> And what is the object of the famous diaeretical method so frequently used in Plato’s later dialogues? This method proceeds by dividing a *genus* into its *species* and these again into subordinate *species*. By means of these stages it builds a kind of pontoon bridge between the highest Idea of a ‘family’ and the individual; it finally reaches or almost reaches the latter when it arrives at the ‘indivisible’ (or ‘individual’) species, although the transition from this to the numerical individual may still remain a problem.<sup>3</sup> Finally—though I am far from sure that I have exhausted the whole variety of ways which Plato devised with this end in view—Plato has been at pains to relieve the tension between Idea and actualities even in the political field. Here the *Laws* mediates between these extremes by setting up less intransigent standards and suggesting less rigid methods—in the *Republic* Plato repudiated the notion that legislation could be an effective remedy<sup>4</sup>—for the realization of political reforms.

The teleological approach too opens up definite possibilities of ‘rescuing’ things physical. When viewed from this perspective, they appear to contribute to the realization of the Good in the sphere of Becoming. It will be necessary to examine Plato’s teleological system in some detail, since it includes as an integral part a concept of the Deity which is remarkably different from that connected with his theory of movements.

The well-known criticism which ‘Socrates’ in *Phaedo* directs against Anaxagoras’ and similar physical systems includes Plato’s first explicit demand for a comprehensive teleological approach. Anaxagoras introduced ‘Mind’ (*νοῦς*) into the cosmic scene, making it the orderer of the Universe, but when he proceeded to explain the various phenomena of the physical world he dropped this principle and suggested causes more in line with the traditional theory of the elements. So at least Plato tells us: ‘I found my philosopher altogether forsaking mind or any other principle of order, but having recourse to air, and ether, and water, and other eccentricities.’<sup>5</sup> What Socrates, or, rather, Plato

misses in Anaxagoras' account is a logical and material connection between the specific explanations of particular phenomena and the universal principle of Mind. He seems to regard it as certain that if particular causes had been properly related to this principle, it would have become clear why it is 'good' that things are as they are, or events happen as they happen, and at the same time what particular function each item has in the architecture of the Whole. 'For I could not imagine that when he spoke of mind as the disposer of them [physical phenomena], he would give any other account of their being as they are, except that this was best.'<sup>6</sup> It seems quite unnecessary to prove that whatever Mind does is good and for the best—obviously it is part of the very nature of *νοῦς* to work with the good of the Whole in view. But to show that phenomena in the Cosmos contribute in a definite way to the well-being of the Whole is something fundamentally different from tracing their physical antecedents and conditions. For Plato these material antecedents constitute only the *conditio sine qua non*, the 'without which not' of the phenomenon under discussion. Judging from the instances of such poor explanations which he adduces, we may assume that Plato would hold that most, if not all, explanations provided in the systems of the Presocratic physicists supplied only the 'without which not'.

Human actions, characterized as they are by the presence of a purpose, serve as models of a teleological pattern. Socrates has remained in prison and not availed himself of the opportunities for escape. But the reason is not that his limbs and bones were shaped and could act in such manner as to enable him to sit there, but that under the circumstances he considered it the best and most thoroughly just course of action to submit to the sentence passed by his city.<sup>7</sup> This was the 'good', the end and purpose towards which his conduct was directed and by which it ought to be explained. Purpose of the same or a similar kind is assumed to reign in the physical world at large, even, it would seem, in its inorganic phases. To understand Plato's belief in a 'cause' so different from the generally accepted type of causality we must remember the place which the concept of the Good

holds in his philosophy. The Good, which he conceived as the norm and object of human actions and which, therefore, looms so large in his analysis of human volition and activity, has objective existence and objective power.<sup>8</sup> From this assumption it is not a very far cry to the postulate that the working of this power should be pointed out in its every manifestation.

On the fundamental proposition that Mind or a divine principle akin to Mind was the creator and orderer of the Universe Plato completely agrees with Anaxagoras. Credit is again given to Anaxagoras in *Cratylus*, and the important role and function of such a divine principle in the Universe is reaffirmed in the *Sophist* and *Philebus*.<sup>9</sup> These passages, though short, serve to show that Plato remained convinced of the presence and agency of a spiritual principle; and as long as he remained convinced of this, he would feel that the task which Anaxagoras had left incomplete had still to be performed. There is in fact one dialogue—later not only than *Phaedo* but also than *Cratylus*, the *Sophist* and perhaps even than *Philebus*—in which the teleological principle is actually applied to a wide range of phenomena. This dialogue is *Timaeus*, and to it we must turn if we wish to understand Plato's concept of Purpose and the relation between Purpose and the Good. Good in its fullest sense (which is realized only in the Idea) implies perfection, eternity, and indestructibility, as well as a number of other qualities which cannot be reproduced in the individual; but some bond with the realm of Perfection seems to be implied whenever objects in the world of Becoming are called 'good'.

In the *Sophist* we found Rest and Movement recognized as *species* of Being and hence one might infer that the original radical opposition between Being and Becoming no longer existed for Plato. Yet in *Timaeus* a sharp line is drawn between these two spheres.<sup>10</sup> Being has the familiar characteristics: it is eternal and unchanging. The hemisphere of Becoming suffers from the shortcomings which in Plato's philosophy invariably attach to it. Its parts come into existence and pass away. Nor has the Cosmos as a whole always existed. It has a beginning—though to call it a beginning in time would not be correct. It also has

a 'body'. It is an object of sense-perception, and is not, like the Ideas and the realm of Being, conceived solely by Mind and Reason. Nor is it 'in the same state for ever'. And we may add that the changes and alterations which the objects in it suffer come to pass in 'Time'; indeed Plato makes clear that 'Time' belongs exclusively to the world of Becoming.<sup>11</sup>

The basic category which Plato here employs to describe the relation between these two realms was, for obvious reasons, not introduced in the analogous passage of the *Sophist* where the claims of Becoming are vindicated. It is the category of Imitation. The visible created Cosmos imitates as far as possible the perfection of the Cosmos of eternal Forms. In fashioning the physical world the divine craftsman has his eyes fixed on the ideal world.<sup>12</sup> Recent studies have quite rightly pointed out that 'Imitation' (μίμησις) with Plato has a twofold connotation. Earthly things and particular objects Plato, as every reader knows, regards as 'imitations' of the Ideas, and therefore as inferior in status, and less perfect than the original which they imitate. On the other hand, the fact that they do imitate and at their best approximate a perfect model secures for them some dignity and value.<sup>13</sup> Even the divine creator cannot invest the Cosmos with every quality typical of the Forms; but if it has been fashioned by so competent a craftsman after such a model it must, in spite of its inevitable deficiencies, have a high status. It is, again, the deity's work to establish a relation between the two realms and to effect a participation of the lower order in the higher. The function of God in *Timaeus* is not so much to impart Life and Movement to the Universe as to make it as a whole as excellent as anything in the order of Becoming may be. If the visible Cosmos imitates the eternal realm of Forms, while the Forms themselves are not able to unite with matter and produce in it a copy that within limits resembles them, there must be some creative power different from the perfect original as well as from the copy and the receptacle in which it is moulded. Because of the different philosophical context both God's function and his relationship to the world are described in terms different from those used in *Phaedrus* and in *Laws* 10.

Yet the essence of God's work is again to impart to the realm of Becoming qualities characteristic of the higher and eternal realm, and in this sense he is again a mediator. But we can scarcely call him a mediator between Being and Becoming, since this would suggest that the latter realm was already in existence before he created it. In a very limited sense Plato does in fact assume that it was there.<sup>14</sup>

The peculiar excellence of the Cosmos is described by Plato in *Timaeus* in terms partly of goodness (*ἀγαθόν*) and partly of beauty (*καλόν*). It is therefore important for us to discover the connotations of these two concepts and what is suggested by their application to the Universe and its various parts and features.

Perfection (or 'goodness') in the visible Cosmos, defined in the most general fashion, means a maximum of resemblance to the ideal Cosmos. There are, however, other more specific concepts and categories to be discerned in Plato's account of its creation. None of these seems more essential than that of 'Order.' The architect of the Universe was convinced that *τάξις* (Order) was 'in every respect better than' *ἀταξία* (Disorder, absence of order). Further, the Cosmos must partake of Reason because all that partakes of Reason (*νοῦς*) is 'more beautiful' than what lacks Reason; in other words, Reason and Rationality are an integral in Beauty. To the Universe as a whole is given that kind of movement which is most appropriate to Reason and befits a rational organism.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere (31b), the presence of what has been logically (i. e., rationally) proved indispensable is held prerequisite to Perfection. Again, Beauty consists in a harmony or an aesthetically and mathematically satisfactory relation—a 'bond' as Plato says—between the elements.<sup>16</sup> At the same time the presence of such a bond insures a maximum of stability, which is certainly 'good'. Other important aspects of Perfection are completeness, uniqueness, self-sufficiency, indestructibility, intrinsic appropriateness. The spheric form is appropriate to the Cosmos because it is (1) the most comprehensive geometrical form, and (2) in this respect homogeneous with the Cosmos, which similarly comprehends everything.<sup>17</sup> From the same pas-

sage we may infer that the absence of whatever would be superfluous and devoid of function makes for Perfection. Measure and number are 'good' in themselves, and it is desirable that the Cosmos should partake of them. Regularity also is to be achieved—as far as possible. Since absence of irregularity is to some extent identical with absence of movement, some types of movement, at least, could be excluded from the better and worthier phases of the Universe.<sup>18</sup> It is also good and in accordance with divine Reason working for Perfection that human souls should be treated according to their deserts, and that a correspondence should be effected between their nature and the circumstances of their outward existence. And whatever is most valuable and akin to Mind and Reason, the factors productive of 'good', should receive preferment and should be established in a position of control over less reasonable factors.<sup>19</sup> In the creation of the human body at least, it has been possible to subordinate inferior organs to the higher, and care has been taken that they should work no more harm than is inevitable. This view largely determines their location and accounts for the functions of some of them. The eyes and the faculty of speech have an important role in awakening man to philosophy, and this function is the principal reason why he has been endowed with them. 'The sight of day and night, and the months and the revolutions of the year, have created number, and have given us a conception of time, and the power of inquiring about the nature of the universe; and from this source we have derived philosophy, than which no greater good ever was or will be given by the gods to mortal man.'<sup>20</sup> The preservation of the 'better' is naturally an important manifestation of the triumph of the teleological principle, and whatever helps towards the right intellectual orientation or the right moral development is 'better' and deserves the special care and attention of the orderers of the Universe. The removal of obstacles to man's physical, and thereby, indirectly, to his spiritual, existence has also been among the purposes of his creators. In some instances they appear even to have been concerned about the protection, self-preservation, and physical efficiency of his body as such, and it seems that certain

phases of his anatomy were determined by reasons no higher than these. But when those who made man had to choose between impairing his intellectual capacities in the interest of his physical longevity or shortening his physical existence but conserving his mental powers, they decided for the latter alternative.<sup>21</sup>

This survey of the various shades of meaning of the 'Good', the 'Beautiful', Perfection, may also indicate the range through which the teleological principle is applied. According to *Timaeus*, it determines the shape of the Universe as a whole, certain important features in the physics of the Heavens, the number and quantitative relation of the elements from which the parts of the Cosmos are made, and finally the shape, location, and function of various organs of the human body.<sup>22</sup> It also accounts for the presence and activity of the World-Soul, concerning which we shall say more presently. Can it be said to extend beyond these phases? No doubt its power is checked by a second principle, Necessity. 'Creation is mixed, being made up of Necessity and Mind.' The material ingredients of the Cosmos follow their own tendencies, which are tendencies devoid of Reason, and where these are in operation the principle of divine purpose cannot assert itself. The reactions of the four elements, which constitute the processes in the Universe, and which also lead to the formation of new entities and substances, seem to flow from their very nature. Since their nature, however, is nothing but the geometrical structure of their respective atoms, the designing Mind would, after all, appear in the last analysis to be responsible for their reactions. For it is the divine Mind which works for the 'best' that has bestowed definite shapes on the atoms. Nor have these shapes (the cube, pyramid, octahedron, icosahedron) been chosen at random. They are the most regular and the most beautiful that exist.<sup>23</sup> Their regularity alone would suffice to secure them a distinguished position in the realm of Forms—as geometrical forms which for Plato mediate between pure 'Forms' and concrete physical objects. Moreover, Plato has a method by which he can show how these forms have in a perfectly 'logical' way sprung from the basic entities of this whole realm. By be-



stowing such shapes on the atoms of his elements the Demiurge makes them partake of 'Order' (*τάξις*),<sup>24</sup> and we have already satisfied ourselves that it is the essence of his work to bring order out of the primeval chaos. Now, since the experiences, activities, and reactions of these elements, their behavior when they mix with one another, depend either wholly or largely on the shapes of their atoms, it does not seem rash to maintain that Teleology and Order extend into all these phases of nature. Still, their sway is less immediate in these regions; and there are in fact sections of considerable length in the latter half of *Timaeus*, in which Plato either has not thought fit, or else considered it unnecessary, to return to the basic geometrical structure of these elements in order to explain their behavior.<sup>25</sup>

The phase of Nature in which the two antagonistic principles—Reason and Necessity—meet, and which in a sense forms the battleground between them, is Man. Man has been created, not immediately by the Demiurge, but by subordinate gods who are his helpers and the executors of his intentions. Into his nature have gone, on the one hand, a particle of Soul, homogeneous with that mathematically constructed and completely harmonious substance of which the World-Soul was made, and on the other, the mortal parts of Soul, which are the seat of passions, emotions, and the like, as also his flesh, bones, muscles, blood, and all else that belongs to his physical organism. These physical parts have been created out of the four elements. Thus their experiences and reactions will be determined by the same laws to which the physical elements are subject everywhere. Physical 'Necessity' also determines sense-perceptions. These perceptions are likely to affect man and to disturb the normal and desirable working of the better, divine part of his Soul.<sup>26</sup> With respect to his appetites and desires, the organs ministering to them have been carefully placed in those parts of his body where they are held in check by others more immediately under the control of Reason; yet all these inferior parts may gain strength at the expense, and to the detriment, of his nobler part. Other adverse effects may be produced by physical sufferings, by any kind of shortcoming or affection

of the body, or by a disparity between soul and body. Plato actually speaks of 'diseases of the soul caused by the state of the body' (86b). But man is fortunately also susceptible to influences of another and better type, such as the philosophical contemplation of the order of the Universe, astronomical studies, the harmony of music. These better influences tend to strengthen that part of the individual soul which is akin and homogeneous with the Soul of the Cosmos. Thus man may either be the servant of his physical nature and a mere link in the chain of 'necessary' causes which determine the physical processes; or he may rise above purely physical 'necessity' and, within the limits of his individual capacities, contribute to the victory of Mind over matter, making the best use of that particle of divinity which was entrusted to him.<sup>27</sup> Education, training, habit, and the general mode of life decide the struggle. But it is not really a struggle between empirical causality and Freedom (in the Kantian sense of these terms) but rather a struggle between two causal series. To be sure, some sentences in this passage are couched in terms of advice or exhortation.<sup>28</sup> Yet the philosophical attitude of a man whose immortal part has been strengthened has its antecedent causes no less than has a life given over to sensual pleasure. The gods who created man have done their best, in the limits set by 'Necessity', to facilitate the rule of his rational part; but whether this part, which belongs in the teleological scheme, or the others through which man is tied to the laws of physical 'Necessity' will emerge superior, is left to the individual. He decides in and through the course of his life, and his decision will determine the status of his soul after this life.<sup>29</sup>

We must, in this connection, remember that the immortal part of the human soul is not a compound of fire, water, air, and earth, but a harmony of numbers. The causal relationship between the body and the inferior parts of the soul is more emphasized and more precisely defined in *Timaeus* than in the works of Plato's early and middle period.<sup>30</sup> And while the opposition between man's intellectual and his sensual or physical nature is familiar to us from many other works of Plato, it is

a peculiar feature of *Timaeus* that this antagonism is placed against a cosmic background.

It would be a mistake to think that the teleological features of *Timaeus* to which we have given our attention were 'picked up' by Plato in the course of an open-minded and, so to speak, empirical inquiry. No doubt some use is made of 'empirical' observation and also of the conclusions of earlier physicists and medical writers, some of whom, we may grant, had an empirical bent. Still, to arrive at the picture of the world which we find incorporated in *Timaeus* Plato had to know beforehand what the 'good' is. Not with any finality of course—and Plato would be the last to claim finality for such knowledge; but of certain definite and inherent characteristics of the 'good' and the 'beautiful' he must needs have been convinced before attempting this essay in cosmology, physics, and anatomy. Even if we did not know that *Timaeus* is one of Plato's latest works, we should be more inclined to think that the system of categories therein employed had been brought to the discussion by the author than that it developed during the investigation or reflects the peculiar nature of the subject. How then does Plato know that the physical world is the 'best of created things'? This proposition is set down at the very beginning of the account of the creation as a kind of 'motto'.<sup>31</sup> The only answer I can suggest is that Plato was convinced of this doctrine on the strength of his unshakable belief in the reality of the Good, its supreme ontological status, its pervasiveness, productivity, and power. Holding firmly to these beliefs, Plato would not think that he understood the Universe unless he could show to what extent and in what fashion the Good was realized in it. To explain the Cosmos and to point out the nature and extent of its teleological structure had for him almost the same meaning. And if we consider the place which the Good occupies in his ontological scheme, it may not be rash to suggest that every instance of perfection and purpose in the Cosmos constitutes a link with Being.

*Timaeus* is, of course, a myth, and Plato gives us sufficient warning not to take his account of the creation *au pied de la*

*lettre*. He claims for it no more than 'likelihood'.<sup>32</sup> No one, I suppose, would use his remarks on the nature of his undertaking to question the fundamental seriousness of Plato's belief in the purposefulness of the Universe, or of his efforts to show that physical necessity alone cannot account for the structure of the Cosmos and Man. But Plato probably would not claim infallibility for his selection of the particular instances which, in *Timaeus*, serve to illustrate the world's orientation towards the Good and the activity of a creative Intelligence. We may also doubt whether Plato would definitely commit himself to the view that the Cosmos had come into being by an act of creation like that described in this work. Some of Plato's pupils and not a few later Platonists denied that it had been his intention to make the Cosmos originate in time and by such an act of creation.<sup>33</sup> In Plato's own account, Time, far from being anterior to the Cosmos, comes into being along with it. It seems to me quite possible even for a modern interpreter to regard this account as symbolical rather than literal. It was, in all probability, more essential for Plato to invest the Universe with qualities which guarantee its metaphysical worth than to solve the problem of its origin. The account of its origin which he gives in *Timaeus* certainly helps to reveal and explain these qualities, but Plato allows or almost encourages us to think that alternative accounts (provided, I take it, that they fulfill the same function) would be but a trifle less 'likely'.<sup>34</sup> To be sure, in the *Sophist* Plato refers to the Cosmos as 'Being in its fullness' or as the 'perfectly real', and in *Phaedrus* he forbids us to think of the World-Soul as created or having an origin in time. Yet, it is only fair to say that the arguments by which he proves in *Timaeus* that the Cosmos belongs to the realm of Becoming and has been created are weighty.<sup>35</sup>

The question of Plato's dogmatic seriousness about the creation of the Universe is important for a number of reasons, and not least because it involves the creator. Let us grant that Plato *could* think of the physical Universe as created. If so, the 'most likely' manner of its creation is that it was created by *someone*. So much we may infer from *Timaeus*. 'Emanation' is certainly

not among the concepts with which Plato could describe the relationship between Being and Becoming. Nor does he credit the Ideas themselves with power to generate a physical world that reflects and in some degree copies them. We might speculate about the reasons why such concepts did not appeal to him, but here it will suffice to recognize that in *Timaeus*, as in *Laws* 10, a third principle is required to mediate between the Ideas and the realm of physical entities.

If a particular object is designed beautifully and in such manner as to serve its function effectively, or if it is copied after the Idea, Plato would infer that it had been made by a competent craftsman. The topic of the craftsman who designs a work suited to a definite purpose is often treated in his dialogues.<sup>36</sup> A piece of work, the craftsman who designs and produces it, and the Idea or perfect form of the object which guided him form a definite pattern in Plato's thought. Here is the prototype of purposeful human activity. The human organ employed in such activity would be *νοῦς*, the thinking Mind bent on the production of something good. Thus, if the Cosmos has been created in imitation of perfect and eternal Forms and bears abundant evidence of design, purpose, and Reason, it must similarly be regarded as the work of a craftsman. In this instance it is a divine craftsman, the Demiurge. 'Demiurge' (*δημιουργός*) is a word which Plato and the Greeks generally apply to an artisan engaged in useful activity, as a rule of a manual type. The work of this divine Demiurge corresponds in its nature to that of a human craftsman. Looking at the Idea—in this instance a most comprehensive Idea which includes manifold specific ideas or species—he makes the world, his product, resemble this pattern as closely as possible. That he and his helpers (to whom we shall later revert) are hampered by the obstinacy of an antagonistic principle has already been mentioned. On the whole Plato is, I think, no more dogmatic about the existence of this divine Demiurge than about any other feature of the account in *Timaeus* or, for that matter, the account as a whole. Things may have come to pass in this way.<sup>37</sup> What he describes is a possibility or just a little more

than that; it is an explanation no more unlikely than any other.

How much does Plato actually say about the Demiurge? Rather little, at least on the face of it. Like the World-Soul in the *Laws*, he is characterized by what he does. There is no indication that his activity extends beyond the creation of the world. Glimpses of the nature and composition—a very immaterial composition as we shall see—of the World-Soul are vouchsafed us in *Timaeus* rather than in Book 10 of the *Laws*, but about the nature of the Demiurge nothing is stated beyond the fact of his goodness.<sup>38</sup> Still, this is an important quality of God, and we have a right to say that, however differently Plato in different contexts conceives of the nature of his God, the element of goodness is never absent. Not the bad, but the good World-Soul is in power according to Book 10 of the *Laws*. In the theology of *Republic* 2 and 3, the goodness of the gods and heroes is a basic proposition, and in developing the point Plato endows them with all virtues—not alone with his cardinal virtues, but with others as well. Yet to say of the Demiurge of *Timaeus* that he is courageous or temperate would make little sense. If he desires to make the world as much like himself as possible, we should understand that the world will resemble him in the quality of *voûs*, Mind and Reason. He has, as far as he was able, established these in dominion and control throughout the world, and the Universe therefore shows their—at least partial—triumph.

The expurgatory tendencies characteristic of Plato's theology in the *Republic* are not within the scope of *Timaeus*. It is, however, of a piece with the exclusion there of ignoble qualities from the concept of the Deity that envy is here said to be incompatible with divine goodness. The same assertion occurs in *Phaedrus* in a sentence which was much cited in antiquity: 'Envy has no place in the celestial choir.'<sup>39</sup> The statement is directed against the age-old *δαιμονία* lingering in the Greek mind with astonishing tenacity as a remnant of the primitive dread which pictured the gods as envious of human success and achievement. It seems logical to assume that the more deeply belief in divine Justice struck root in the Greek mind, the more

unnecessary and repugnant this primitive conception of divine envy must have appeared; for there is no point in believing in God's justice unless it is considered an adequate explanation of his deeds. But we are not in a position to trace the gradual decrease of the primitive notion, and do not even know whether anyone before Plato had raised his voice in protest against it.

Plato emphasizes that the divine Craftsman, when confronted with the rival principle of physical 'Necessity', attains his partial victory over it and gains whatever ground he gains through 'Persuasion' (*πειθώ*). It is Persuasion that has caused 'Nature' to yield in some measure to the demands of Mind and to allow some of her phases to take on such forms as were suggested by Reason. 'Mind overruled Necessity by persuading her to bring the greater part of created things to perfection.'<sup>40</sup>

The opposite of 'Persuasion' in Greek thought is Force (*βία*), and by stressing Persuasion Plato obviously excludes Force as a mode of divine activity. I should not go to the length of maintaining that the Greek concept of Goodness excludes Power. But Power (*κράτος*) and Force (*βία*) are distinct concepts in Greek as well as in English. Another quality opposed to Persuasion that suggests itself (though it may be a trifle less obvious than Force) is 'ruse' or 'stratagem' (*δόλος*). Homer's gods take delight in stratagems, and even the gods of Greek Tragedy sometimes resort to them. Thus, it seems worth noticing, Plato excludes this mode of activity too by making his god work solely through Persuasion. And the only reason we may imagine for Plato's repudiation of every other mode of divine procedure is his conviction that God is good.

The power that shapes the world and counteracts Necessity in *Timaeus* is called 'Mind' (*νοῦς*). In truth Mind if anything is the agent in Plato's teleological scheme; *ψυχή* seems to lack the qualities of a designing, purposeful builder, of a careful, planning architect. In Book 10 of the *Laws* Plato says that the World-Soul, 'when she takes as her ally Mind, . . . leads all things in the right way and to their happiness.'<sup>41</sup> That she allies herself with Mind seems an essential condition for attaining this end; in the next part of the same sentence Plato thinks of the

alternative possibility, that Soul allies herself to 'Unreasonableness' (*ἀνοία*, the opposite of *νοῦς*), in which case opposite results will be brought about. We have earlier in this chapter referred to the criticism of Anaxagoras in *Phaedo*. Anaxagoras, though making Mind the orderer of the Universe, had failed to show why it is 'best' that parts of the Cosmos behave as they do. Evidently Plato expected him to proceed to such teleological explanations once he had committed himself to the theory of Mind. In *Timaeus* Plato does precisely what Anaxagoras according to his account had omitted to do.

Some of the passages in *Timaeus* which describe the antagonism between Mind and Necessity may, if considered in isolation, lend themselves to the interpretation that Mind is an immanent principle in Plato's Universe. Nor would it be entirely wrong to suppose that, once the world is made, Mind works from within it.<sup>42</sup> The created world displays an inherent rationality. Nevertheless, it is clearly the function of the Demiurge to invest creation with this quality, a fact which suggests that his nature is Mind since his works are the works of Mind. By introducing Mind into the world, the work of his hands, he makes it as much as he can like himself.

The aspects of the physical world which give it its ontological status and dignity are Movement (traced to a perfect prototype), Life, Order, Design, Rationality. When focusing on the first two, Plato thinks of the divine principle as Soul (which in order to bring about the other three must ally itself to Mind). On the other hand, when he is primarily concerned with the rational order and structure of the Cosmos, Plato (like Anaxagoras) conceives of the Deity in terms of Mind. This is the situation in *Timaeus*. It seems arbitrary to force the doctrines of *Laws* 10 upon *Timaeus* and to interpret the Demiurge as the divine Soul<sup>43</sup>—superior, it would seem necessary to assume from this point of view, to that other Soul which the Demiurge himself fashions and locates within the world. Apart from the fact that we nowhere in Plato learn of the power of a first Soul to generate other souls, there is nothing in the description of the Demiurge to suggest or support such an interpretation. He brings about



neither Life nor Movement, nor is his own nature described in terms of a harmony.

The World-Soul of *Timaeus* is of the Demiurge's creation. The world needs a Soul, and since the Soul of the world is older than its body (a doctrine in keeping with what we read in *Laws* 10), the creation of the World-Soul must precede in time that of the material components and individual parts of the Universe. In working out *Timaeus* Plato found it necessary to make his description of the creation and composition of the World-Soul follow his account of the creation of the material composition of the World, but he himself points out <sup>44</sup> that this sequence does not reflect the actual temporal order in which they were made. The necessity of Soul's presence in the Cosmos is deduced from the necessity of the presence of Mind, that kindred power which, as we have seen, is even more basic: 'The creator . . . found that no irrational creature taken as a whole was more beautiful than a rational creature taken as a whole; and that Reason could not be present in anything which was devoid of Soul.' <sup>45</sup> Soul thus has an important place in the teleological scheme. In the sentence just cited, in which Soul is first mentioned in the dialogue, Plato contents himself with stating that it is logically indispensable to secure for the Cosmos Mind, rationality, and Perfection, in order to make it really the best possible world. But, once introduced, Soul is given a most essential function. This function is not new: Soul rules, is the principle of Life and the originator of Movement.<sup>46</sup> In addition to these activities it is also credited with certain epistemological functions. It is the organ of Knowledge and Opinion, corresponding on the cosmic scale to the activities of the individual human soul. It is noteworthy that on the nature and structure of the World-Soul we receive much fuller information in *Timaeus* than in either *Phaedrus* or *Laws* 10. Only here, in fact, does Plato offer a detailed theory about its composition. This theory is, in brief, that its nature is a pattern of numbers analogous to a musical scale. Fortunately we need not here discuss the involved details of this construction, which has called for extensive and subtle commentaries in both ancient and modern times. Enough if we realize

that the structure of the World-Soul represents a perfect harmony.<sup>47</sup> Harmony is, however, for Plato characteristic of virtue and of both physical and moral excellence. We may thus confidently conclude that the principle which he conceives as immanent in the world and directing its processes has every excellence, and is perfectly wise and orderly.

How the World-Soul in the system of *Timaeus* actually fulfills the functions which Plato assigns to it is another question. The planets are located in the orbits which are parts of one of the two 'circles' of the World-Soul; and, as Professor Taylor well says,<sup>48</sup> 'The regularity of the celestial movements'—both of the planets and of the whole Heaven—'has . . . to be understood as a consequence and embodiment of an orderliness which is more intimate and profound and has its seat in the cosmic Psyche.' As regards other movements in the Universe, we may perhaps infer from *Timaeus* 58 that they are caused by a physical pressure exerted by the circumference of the Whole. It seems to be a kind of thrust: 'The revolution of the whole, . . . being circular and having a tendency to come together, compresses everything and will not allow any place to be left void. . . . And the contraction caused by the compression thrusts the smaller particles into the interstices of the larger.' Since the World-Soul which encompasses the whole of the Universe extends through this outer circumference, it is at least arguable that in *Timaeus* too Soul is, in the full meaning of the word, the originator of all movements. For it is evidently Plato's idea that the original movement caused by the pressure of the outer circumference gives rise to all other movements and changes in the world. This influence would be in keeping with the role which Soul performs in Book 10 of the *Laws*.<sup>49</sup> We should, however, note that this passage is the only reference in *Timaeus* to the important function of the outer circumference and, if I interpret it rightly, of Soul in the system of movements. All particular changes and processes are explained by the material or geometrical qualities of the elements without reference to the 'prime mover'. Whether this fact is important or unimportant I do not venture to decide. Certainly the power which is struggling with

elemental physical Necessity and achieving only a partial triumph is not the World-Soul, but Mind and the purposeful activity of the Demiurge. The impression which a reader of *Timaeus* gets is that Mind is the basic principle, that it is intent on creating as much 'good' as possible, and that the World-Soul is one of the implements created and employed by the divine Mind in pursuance of its purpose. By introducing the World-Soul into his creation and giving her a place, status, and function, the Demiurge secures for the work of his hands certain important gains. Life in the Universe now flows from a source whose intrinsic wisdom and perfection are above question. Movement and change have their ultimate origin in a power that is allied to Order and Sameness and tends to promote Regularity and Beauty<sup>50</sup>—indeed the actually perfect movements of the Heaven and of the spheres which carry the planets may be regarded as the movements of Soul herself or of her parts. Man too and his soul receive an important status since his better part is homogeneous with a power of highest dignity. In all these fashions Soul contributes to the achievement of the Demiurge's purpose, but she herself owes her existence and structure to Him. Even if Soul is constructed in such a manner that, as some scholars have suggested,<sup>51</sup> through her own nature she knows all proportions, laws, and rules, she is not the organ that brings them into the Cosmos.

In some respects, then, the relation between Soul and Mind in *Timaeus* is the reverse of that suggested in Book 10 of the *Laws*. In *Timaeus*, the creative Mind, anxious to produce the best state of things, utilizes in some phases of the Cosmos the capacities of the World-Soul which will help towards the goal. In *Laws* 10, the World-Soul herself is held responsible for what is good—as well as for what is bad; she 'guides all things to growth and decay, to composition and decomposition', and when working towards reasonable ends, 'takes Mind along'.<sup>52</sup> It would be rash to maintain that in *Laws* 10 the recognition of an evil principle caused Plato to relegate *voûs* to a secondary position. For the bad power is also a soul, and the difference between the two souls lies precisely in the fact that the good Soul 'takes Mind along'

with her and works what she works in coöperation with Mind. Thus we had better content ourselves with saying that Plato's approach is somewhat different in *Laws* 10. After all, in *Timaeus* Plato's primary concern is with the world as a whole, whereas in the *Laws* he turns immediately to the question: What is it basically that keeps the world going?

While the functioning of the World-Soul in the Universe must be uninterrupted, and she herself must be present as long as the world exists—if the World is eternal the World-Soul is coeternal—the function of the Demiurge is exhausted in his creation of the world. In this process he stamps on it that rationality and provides it with that intrinsic excellence and orientation towards the Good which it may and should have, and which more deeply justify its existence. We have in another chapter<sup>53</sup> suggested that in Plato's later philosophy the World of Becoming is an essential and indispensable complement to the realm of pure Being. We may now say that *Timaeus* presents us with a picture of this world of Becoming in which it is endowed with enough intrinsic worth to complement and materialize pure Being.

The heavenly bodies too are divine. They are said to represent the highest of the four classes of living beings, but like the World-Soul they have been made by the Demiurge. Their movements are those of the parts and 'circles' of the World-Soul, with whom they are thus intimately and for ever connected.<sup>54</sup> It would not be easy to identify their relation to the Soul who moves the world with one of the three relationships which are suggested (as alternatives) in *Laws* 10, but these difficulties need not detain us here. In addition to star-deities, gods and goddesses like Gaia and Uranus and their descendants who figured in the pedigrees composed by the theogonic poets are also recognized. But they are later in origin than the Demiurge and inferior to him in status. They are part of his creation and therefore dependent on him. Plato does not commit himself without reserve to the descriptions and genealogical accounts of these gods given by the poets, though I must confess that I fail to detect the ironical undertone which some scholars have found in his comments on them.<sup>55</sup> In general a friendly attitude to the gods of poetic

tradition—as well as to those worshipped in the Greek communities—may be noticed in several passages of his late works, although he probably would not grant all the details of the traditional accounts. For one thing, it is improbable that he would be prepared to surrender the standards of divine morality laid down in Books 2 and 3 of the *Republic*. In *Timaeus* he accepts the existence of these gods in general terms, but at the same time assigns to them a fixed place in his own theological and cosmological scheme. Their function shows clearly enough that they are not on a par with the Demiurge, since they are to carry out those phases of the creator's work in which the divine principle of Mind can no longer realize itself completely. Plato here faces a problem which was to engage the attention of many later Greek philosophers; as soon as a philosophic concept of the deity had taken shape, the place and function of the traditional Greek gods, Zeus, Hera, and the rest, had to be redefined, and their relation to the new philosophic deity clarified.

Again, the Cosmos itself is divine; Plato even calls it God.<sup>56</sup> As we know, it had for the Greeks always been invested with a divine quality, and just as in his approach from the theory of movements, so here Plato restores this quality to it on new grounds and on a higher level. The divinity of the Cosmos now rests on its orientation towards the Good, towards the realm of perfect Forms, and on the realization that Mind is at work in it. As we have seen, Plato carries out what had been implied in the theory of Anaxagoras and what in all probability had been attempted by one or several thinkers after Anaxagoras: he explains the visible world teleologically. Needless to say, he knew infinitely more about the Good and about Perfection than anyone before him—we have seen how rich and diversified the connotations of τὸ ἀγαθόν have become with Plato. This superior knowledge alone would account for his great advance over all his predecessors. A few more specific points may nevertheless be mentioned. Plato follows the Pythagoreans (as to our knowledge Anaxagoras had not done) in recognizing mathematics and numerical as well as other mathematical relations as ideal patterns of order and harmony, and makes use of such relations in more than one phase

of his Universe, for example, in the composition of the World-Soul, in his first selection of the four basic elements, in the construction of their atoms.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, while earlier authors of teleological systems had dwelt on the usefulness of man's organs for man himself, in Plato's view this would be sheer diletantism. For him, Man is but an item, though an important one, in a far more comprehensive organization, and the various lines of teleological argument converge towards an end beyond Man. Order, Purpose, and the Best are realized in the Universe in its entirety; this is the whole towards whose well-being every part contributes.<sup>58</sup> Later teleological thought partly followed Plato in accepting this new point of reference for the whole teleological scheme, partly relapsed into the anthropocentric approach from which Plato had escaped.<sup>59</sup> Plato's new teleological system includes also the recognition that certain aspects and portions of the Whole are more valuable and higher in status than others. To this subject we shall return in Chapter IX. Finally, it was a great new achievement to draw a clear line between the field where Mind and Purpose rule and the other that remains given over to 'Necessity', the 'erring cause' that works without purpose. Plato had found fault with Anaxagoras, charging that in spite of his proclamation of the supremacy and unique position of Mind Anaxagoras had actually used the other principle in his explanations. *Timaeus* admits that 'Necessity' cannot be excluded; its partial influence is recognized; but enough in the Universe bears witness to the power and triumph of Mind to justify calling the entire Cosmos the divine product of divine workmanship.

## NOTES

1 53 c ff. Cf. J. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt in Plato und Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1924), pp. 60-83; A. T. Nicol in *Class. Quart.* 30 (1936). 120 ff., especially 122 f.

2 For μέτρον see *Polit.* 283 d, 285 a; *Phileb.* 55 e ff. (cf. 64 d-e); *Legg.* 11. 918 c f. (also 8. 836 a etc.).

3 See Stenzel, *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, pp. 86-95, 163; Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 186, 270.

4 *Rep.* 4. 425 c-e.

5 *Phaed.* 97 c-99, especially 98 b-c.

6 *Phaed.* 98 a; cf. 97 b-c.

7 *Phaed.* 98 c-99 a. On the relation between *Phaed.* and *Tim.* see Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London, 1936), pp. 174 f.; Shorey, *What Plato Said*, p. 346;

P. Friedländer, *Plato*, vol. 2: *Die Platonischen Schriften* (Berlin, 1930), p. 603. See also A. Diès, *Autour de Platon*, pp. 551 f., and for some good comments on the concept of purpose in Plato J. E. Boodin, 'Cosmology in Plato's Thought', *Mind* 38 (1929), 489.

8 Plato's *ἀγαθόν* exists prior to and independent of all human thought about it, but *πάν τὸ γινώσκον* (*Phileb.* 20 d) seeks to find and secure it; cf. *Gorg.* 468. Again everything that really is owes its being and reality to the *ἀγαθόν* (*Rep.* 6. 509 b).

9 *Crat.* 400 a; *Soph.* 265 c (θεοῦ δημιουργοῦντος . . . μετὰ λόγου τε καὶ ἐπιστήμης θέας ἀπὸ θεοῦ γιγνομένης); *Phileb.* 28 d f., 30 c.

10 *Tim.* 27 d-28 b.

11 37 d ff.

12 Cf. 29 a 1; 30 c ff.; 37 c.

13 Among a considerable number of passages that throw light on the desirable variety of *μίμησις* it will suffice to mention two: *Legg.* 7. 796 b-c; 8. 817 b. Cf. Friedländer, p. 6; Diès, p. 594; Manasse, *op. cit.* (Chapter V, Note 4) *passim*; Stefanini, *op. cit.* (Chapter V, Note 20) 2. 32 ff., 273, 326.

14 See especially 53 b (*ἵχνη μὲν ἔχοντα αὐτῶν ἅρτα*); cf. Cornford, *Cosmology*, pp. 202, 208 ff. For the Demiurge's activity cf. Stefanini, *op. cit.*, 2. 373.

15 34 a; see also 30 a-b.

16 31 b-32 c.

17 33 b; see also 30 c-31 b, 32 c (note *φιλίας, ἄλυτον*)-33 a.

18 34 a; cf. 33 d.

19 For treatment of souls: 42 a ff., 91 d ff.; preferential status: 44 d f., 45 a f.; Reason in control: 69 d-70 a, 70 a, and especially the description of the function of the liver 71 a ff.

20 47 a-b; cf. b-d.

21 72 e ff., 74 a-75 a; the alternative: 75 b-c; see also 75 e ff.

22 See Notes 16, 17, 19, 20, 21.

23 53 b, 53 d-e; for the behavior of the elements see 56 c ff.

24 53 b, 56 c; cf. 30 a, 69 b. Cf. Léon Robin, *Études sur la place et la signification de la Physique dans la Philosophie de Platon* (Paris, 1919), pp. 61 f. The method is announced 53 c, applied 53 c-55 c. *Τῶν κατὰ παιδείαν ὁδῶν* seems to me to stress the methodical aspect; Cornford obviously feels differently, since he translates this phrase 'branches of learning'.

25 Cf., e. g., the description of the bone 73 e and the whole section on diseases 81 e ff. See however 82 d. The matter requires further investigation.

26 42 a, 43 a-44 c, 86 b-87 b; cf. 69 c f. The reasoning of W. F. R. Hardie, *A Study in Plato* (Oxford, 1936), p. 135, is refuted by Plato's clear words in 42 a, 43 a, 69 c. See also Cornford, *Cosmology*, pp. 346 f.

27 86 b-89 c, 89 d-90 d.

28 88 b-c which includes a new definition of *καλοκαγαθία*, 89 d, 90 a, 90 d.

29 90 e, 91 d ff. See however 87 b.

30 Cf. Cornford, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-9.

31 29 a. To construct a picture of Plato's philosophy with *Timaeus* as a basis is a hazardous undertaking. I am not sure that Professor Demos in *The Philosophy of Plato* (New York, 1939) has fully succeeded in overcoming the difficulties inherent in such an attempt.

32 See especially 29 b-d; cf. Cornford, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff. Ernst Howald in his paper 'Eikos logos', in *Hermes* 57 (1922), 63-79, seems to me guilty of considerable exaggerations; nor can I follow A. E. Taylor's explanation in *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford, 1928), p. 73. See also Shorey, *What Plato Said*, pp. 347 ff.

33 The evidence has been collected and discussed by Taylor, pp. 67 ff. For an addition see Cornford, p. 26, n. 2.

34 29 c, 48 d. See above, p. 98.

35 See *Soph.* 248 e; *Phaedr.* 245 c ff. (cf. also *Legg.* 12. 966 d-e where it will hardly do to take *δέναον* as meaning no more than 'ever-flowing'); *Tim.* 28 b-c.

36 See Ast's *Index s. v.* δημιουργός and δημιουργῶ. *Gorg.* 503 e and *Rep.* 10. 596 b are particularly important passages. See also *Legg.* 10. 903 c. In *Rep.* 10. 596 b Plato introduces a δημιουργός who is not only the creator of everything in the Cosmos but also of the prototypes of those things which the individual τέχναι produce (cf. 597 b-d). He is also said to create himself (596 c). Although he is not described as the creator of the basic ethical Ideas, he represents a conception of the divine power that is different from anything that we find in Plato's later works. For a convincing explanation of this unique passage see Harold Cherniss in *A. J. P.* 53 (1932). 232 ff., esp. 239 f. Cf. also G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought* (London, 1935), p. 159. On the difficult passage *Epist.* 6. 323 d see below, Chapter VIII, Note 18.

37 Cf. Cornford, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-32, 34-39.

38 29 e; see above, p. 68, and below, p. 149.

39 *Tim.* 29 e; *Phaedr.* 247 a. Cf. also *Critias* 109 b.

40 *Tim.* 48 a.

41 *Legg.* 10. 897 a.

42 Cf. *Tim.* 30 b, 36 e, as well as every passage in which the teleological principle is applied. But though νόϋς may be said to be immanent in the Cosmos, it is as wrong to say that 'Mind is a manifestation of life' as it is to suggest that 'Reason is a soul' (Demos, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 f.). After all, Plato himself tells us how these powers work and how they are related to one another.

43 Taylor in his *Commentary* seems to commit this mistake; see pp. 64, 75 ff., 82 and *passim*; the difficulties which Professor Taylor points out at the end of his work (p. 678, see also p. 516) result entirely from this mistaken identification. Bovet (Ch. II, N. 27) looks in *Timaeus* for a confirmation of his theory that the Platonic definition of God would be 'un dieu est une âme parfaite' (p. 152 f.). Demos, on the other hand, in his chapter on God (*op. cit.*, pp. 99-125), relies as far as I can see mainly on *Timaeus*, and fails to do full justice to *Laws* 10. Professor Grube, *op. cit.*, pp. 170 ff., appears to me too prone to identify concepts like the Demiurge, Soul, and others, which it would be better to keep distinct. On W. F. R. Hardie's views see my remarks below, p. 192 (195)

44 34 b-c.

45 30 b. In view of the last sentence it might be argued that not even the Demiurge can represent the principle of Reason if he is not 'Soul'. But such an argument would not be convincing. At 30 b Plato is thinking of the Cosmos and wondering how the Cosmos could be made to conform to Reason. In point of fact, there are many instances of Reason and reasonable organization in the Cosmos which are in no way due to the presence of the World-Soul. And the activities of the Demiurge are certainly activities typical of νόϋς.

46 36 e; see above, Chapter V.

47 34 e-36 b. Considerable progress has recently been made in explaining the details of the structure of the World-Soul (see especially Cornford, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-93); yet the interest taken in this subject seems to have diverted scholars' attention from the other question—why Plato constructs the Soul along such lines. See however Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

48 *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

49 See below, pp. 139 f.



50 36 d-e. 37 c indicates that *κλήσις* and *ζωή* come to the universe from the World-Soul. Cf. again 58 a.

51 See especially Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

52 Legg. 10. 897 b.

53 See above, pp. 76 ff.

54 See 38 c ff., 40 a (cf. 36 c). The stars are called *οὐράνιον θεῶν γένος* (39 e).

55 See Taylor, p. 245; but cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935), p. 240; Cornford, p. 139.

56 34 a-b, 68 e, 92 c. Cf. Legg. 7. 821 a. See also Stefanini, *op. cit.* 2. 360.

57 31 b ff., 35 a ff., 53 c ff.

58 Cf. 39 d-e, 41 b-c, 68 e, 92 c. See however 77 a where the plants are said to have been created as a *βοήθεια* for human beings.

59 Students of ancient teleology have as far as I can see failed to give due attention to these divergent tendencies within the teleological tradition. It is interesting to observe the shifts in the teleological orientation which occur in Book 2 of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, though the students of Cicero's sources do not seem fully aware of their importance. For the teleological view as applied by Aristotle and Plotinus see my remarks below, pp. 183 ff. A thorough-going investigation of the whole complex of questions seems to be needed. (Professor A. S. Pease's paper 'Caeli enarrant', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 34 (1941) appeared while this book was in print.)

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS

TO ASSERT that Plato in some phases of his philosophy is indebted to the mystery-religions is merely to translate his own plain and unequivocal acknowledgments into the language of scholarship. That his debt is to the Orphics in particular was not very long ago disputed by an eminent authority, but may nevertheless be regarded as a well-founded assumption.<sup>1</sup> Plato certainly remoulds whatever he borrows, and I think that his refashioning of Orphic doctrines may be studied with some degree of accuracy, especially in *Phaedo*. However this may be, an attempt to connect Plato's philosophy of religion with earlier movements of Greek thought would be incomplete if nothing were said about the extent to which the mystery-religions contributed to the origin and formulation of his religious ideas.

We must, however, bear in mind that what we are here investigating is not primarily Plato's philosophy of Soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ) but his philosophy of God. If we were primarily concerned with his theory of Soul, we should have to go rather deeply into his proofs of immortality and should attempt an analysis of his eschatological myths. What we have to examine in this study is the concepts of the deity which are presupposed in those parts of his works (including the myths centring in the fate of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ) where he is obviously drawing on the beliefs and the imagery of the mysteries. The subject does not require a very long discussion.

A basic conviction of the Orphics with which Plato fully agrees and which forms the theme of his eschatological myths, at least in *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*, is confidence in divine care for human souls and in divine Justice. The deity who determines the fate of human souls after death, in whatever form he may be conceived, certainly makes human beings the object of his particular

care and treats them according to their merits. If we were to enter upon the question what constitutes a merit we should at once have to distinguish between the traditional and the new, i. e., the Platonic elements in the conception of a 'good life'; but for our purpose this is not necessary. Human beings are regarded as the property (κτῆματα) of the gods; as such, they should feel an obligation towards their masters (δεσπότες). They are not allowed to disobey the divine will or to frustrate divine intentions.<sup>2</sup> For the gods, these tenets imply genuine interest in human individuals and real concern about the individual's performance of, or failure to perform, the task which is entrusted to him. As we have seen, there were theories abroad at Plato's time which suggested that the gods were altogether indifferent to mankind.<sup>3</sup> To refute these theories by convincing arguments was not easy; nor do the discussions in the dialogues of Plato's early and middle periods point to any conclusions on these problems. It was the mystery-religions which gave him a certainty, depending not at all on arguments, that the gods are anything but indifferent to human beings.

Another aspect of the same belief is confidence in divine Justice. It seems to have been a basic creed in some mystery-religions that the 'pure' will be rewarded, the 'impure' punished, after death.<sup>4</sup> Such a creed leads to confidence that whatever is unsatisfactory in the relationship between a man's merits and his experiences in this world will be made good after his death. This belief is, as everybody knows, the basis of Plato's eschatological myths, especially, again, those of *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*. Let us note that for Plato purity, goodness, and justice are definitely attributes of human conduct, and that he has no patience with the notion that the act of initiation into the mysteries guarantees *per se* pleasant experience after death and may efface ethical shortcomings.<sup>5</sup> Again, the idea of divine Justice was one of the most heavily contested and most thoroughly undermined in Plato's time, and again it is not the arguments and discussions of his early dialogues which help reestablish it. The teachings of the mystery-religions inspired Plato with confidence in the justice of the divine 'masters' even before he was either able or willing to

approach this subject through the paths of a philosophical theology. Both the notion that man is the property of the gods for which they feel concern and the belief in a just balance to be effected after death will be found incorporated in Plato's last and most comprehensive treatment of the religious problem in *Laws* 10.

Beyond these and similar specific beliefs, the mysteries carried with them a general assurance of the unique worth and the divine or nearly divine quality of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ . Plato certainly found this assurance in them, and it would be unwarranted to think that he found it only because he looked for it. Enough evidence is available to show that in at least some of the mysteries the 'soul' was considered man's immortal part, infinitely more precious than his body, and much closer to the nature of the gods themselves.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, all these teachings referred to the individual soul, and we must admit that, in whatever terms Plato may have conceived of God, he did not identify Him with the individual soul. Nevertheless, it can hardly be questioned that the great emphasis which had been placed on  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  by the mystery-religions and the exceptional religious worth with which it had been invested made Plato turn all the more readily to the notion of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  when he needed a concrete symbol for his concept of an ever-flowing, inexhaustible source of cosmic life. Once his new doctrine of a cosmic Soul had taken shape, the idea of kinship between the individual soul and the deity had also to be reformulated on the new level, and it became possible to vindicate philosophically, against the background of a cosmic theology, that unique status of the individual soul which had been the creed of the mystery-religions.<sup>7</sup>

The firm religious conviction that God is concerned about our souls is bound to be accompanied by an emotional state quite unlike that of a man engaged in speculations about the working of the Universe. Although ecstasy has no place in Plato's religion—and there may in fact have been less room for it in Orphism than in, say, the Dionysiac religion—the emotional ardor of the *mystes* is different in type from the intellectual satisfaction which rewards the physicist. That ardor more nearly approaches what we

commonly call piety; the relationship between the individual and God is closer and of a more direct and personal quality. Now a tone of piety is clearly present in some of Plato's discussions of religion. Even if we leave aside the eschatological myths, we cannot fail to recognize this tone and attitude in the disquisition of *Laws* 10, though they are more obvious in some sections than in others. The tone is particularly marked where Plato exhorts the young to believe themselves under the care of the gods and to feel confident that divine watchfulness and Providence encompass everything. We have satisfied ourselves that the belief in divine 'masters' who are interested in human beings was inherited by Plato from the Orphic mysteries (or from the religious mysteries in general); it is understandable, both historically and from the nature of the subject, that an attitude of personal piety and a feeling of confidence in the divine rule should be more evident in the sections treating of Providence than in certain others. Even an element of resignation is appropriate in this context. To be sure, Plato had never suggested that man could attain a complete and adequate knowledge of the divine nature and its mode of operation. Yet there is a difference of degree, if not a more fundamental difference, between the attempt to prove the existence of the gods in the earlier part of *Laws* 10 and the emphasis given in later passages to the contrast between human dependence and relativity and divine omniscience and all-powerfulness. In the same context, we find the relationship between man and God once more described in terms of owner and property, and read again of the rewards of the good and the punishments in Hades of the wicked, subjects familiar to us from the eschatological myths of earlier works.<sup>8</sup> Besides and beyond specific doctrines, this general feeling of man's dependence on the gods and the atmosphere of religious awe had fascinated Plato in the mystery-religions; and these we must recognize as part of his own approach to the religious problem. They are present even during the last stage of Plato's thought, at a time when he was fully equipped to defend the religious position by 'intellectual' means. They balance the intellectual approach, keeping it to the right proportion.

## NOTES

1 I take it that Wilamowitz's challenge, in *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Berlin, 1930-1932) 2. 194, 197: 'Eine orphische Seelenlehre soll erst mal einer nachweisen.' 'Nur die Modernen wissen dass Plato's Hadesbilder . . . von Orpheus stammen' has been met by W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935), especially pp. 158-69. Particularly important passages are *Men.* 81 a-c; *Phaed.* 69 c, 81 a; *Crat.* 400 c; *Legg.* 9. 870 d f., 871 d f.; *Epist.* 7. 335 a.

2 *Phaed.* 62 b-c. For parallels which point to the Orphics see John Burnet's commentary, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1911), *ad loc.*; some of the passages he cites, however, reflect Plato's own words. For Plato's refinements on what he borrows from the 'theologians' see Erwin Rohde, *Psyche* (tr. by W. B. Hillis, London, 1925), pp. 468-70. Cf. also Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 242 f.

3 See above, pp. 23 ff.

4 In addition to Rohde and Guthrie and numerous recent dissertations and papers, most of which are discussed by Guthrie, cf. two works which give a good survey of the material: Eduard Norden, *Vergilius Aeneis Buch VI* (3rd ed., Berlin, 1927), pp. 3-48, and Albrecht Dieterich, *Nekyia*, (Leipzig, 1893), *passim*. Both, it is true, use terms like 'Orphic' somewhat too freely, but the same may be said of most of the more recent works. It is certainly true of Otto Kern's collection, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin, 1922). Guthrie on the other hand discriminates very carefully, so that his method should serve as model for future studies, even though his explanation of the origin of Orphism strikes me as slightly too rationalistic.

5 See above, p. 28.

6 Cf. especially *Men.* 81 a-c; and also *Epist.* 7. 335 a; *Phaed.* 80-1. For the background see especially Pindar, *Frgs.* 131, 133. The latter fragment (which Plato quotes in the passage of *Meno*) has been interpreted recently by H. J. Rose, *Greek Poetry and Life*, in *Essays presented to Gilbert Murray* (Oxford, 1936); see in particular p. 92 for Rose's discussion of the divine nature of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  as a tenet of the mystery religions. See also P. Frutiger, *Les mythes de Platon* (Paris, 1930), p. 254.

7 See above, p. 93.

8 *Legg.* 902 b, 904 c-905 d, 906 a. For reasons which would require a rather long discussion I am inclined to consider the eschatological myths of *Gorgias* and *Phaedo* as somewhat closer to the imagery and the beliefs of the mystery-religions than that of the *Republic*, in which Plato seems to me to have refashioned the original pattern (if it is permissible to use this term) to bring out a point which he was very anxious to make, namely the importance of the right choice. The myth of *Phaedrus* has an even greater number of new features. J. A. Stewart's appraisal of the Platonic myths in *The Myths of Plato* (London, 1905), pp. 43-71, is very interesting but has no bearing on our question; the same is true of Karl Reinhardt, *Plato's Mythen* (Bonn, 1928).



## THE COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE





NATURAL EVOLUTION AND THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF SOUL

WE HAVE in the preceding chapters satisfied ourselves that Plato approaches the problem of the nature and activities of the Deity in a variety of ways. Strictly speaking, however, he did not in the passages which we have examined 'approach' the religious problem as such. He discussed other subjects, such as the nature of Being, the nature of the Universe, the status of Soul. Indeed, the diversity of his views concerning the Deity is largely determined by this very variety of contexts and subjects. But the diversity itself remains worthy of note. 'The father and maker of all this Universe is past finding out, and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible,' that is a sentence which we should always bear in mind while dealing with Plato's theology.<sup>1</sup>

We should overstate our case, however, if we refused to find any continuity at all in Plato's successive attacks on the problem, or supposed that any conception of the divine being at which he had arrived might as soon as it was formulated be surrendered in favor of a new one. Theoretically, it is possible that the expurgatory method, the attack from the question of movements, the concept of the divine Demiurge, and the imagery of the mystery-religions do not exhaust the variety of ways in which Plato could proceed. Actually, it is probable that these lines of thought were the essential ones, and that he clung to them; for they all reappear in his last and most comprehensive discussion of religion, and as far as I can see no other motif is added. The last discussion is included in the *Laws*, and forms part of the legislative scheme proposed for the ideal city. To be sure, this fact implies that there is once again a context into which the reli-

gious and theological problem has been fitted. The defense of religion is meant to strengthen a particular set of laws, those against atheism. This set of laws is, however, of particular weight, and though they come late in the work they are first in order of importance. 'The demonstration [of God's existence] would be the best and noblest prelude for all our laws.'<sup>2</sup>

Plato appears to contemplate a relation of mutual support between religion and the laws. The rulers of the city will be anxious to safeguard the gods of the Polis against atheistic ventures or religious innovations by the citizens. Conversely, religion will inspire the citizens with due reverence for the laws and institutions of their State and will act as the most powerful incentive to loyal conduct and the strongest deterrent from transgressions.<sup>3</sup> If the arguments against atheism are described as a 'prelude' (*προοίμιον*) for the whole body of laws, it seems legitimate to conclude that religion is the basis of Plato's city. This conclusion is borne out by the whole of Book 10 as well as by the atmosphere and outlook of the entire work, for throughout the *Laws* the religious element is considerably more prominent than it was in the *Republic*. While we should not say that the political system of the *Republic* leaves no room at all for religion, it is right to say that in that work religion is not recognized as a vital and integral element in the political structure. The references to religion are mostly casual; the stability of the political organism rests on safeguards of a secular and rational type. Mythology—of the proper kind—is recognized as a formative influence in the education of the young since it will mould their minds in a definite and important fashion, but to give it a place in education is not the same as to give it a place in the actual structure of the State and of community life as such.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Laws* the situation is different. Here, Plato's object is to incorporate religion as an integral part into the life of his city. The atheist is regarded as a political offender who endangers the safety of the city, and hence the severity of the laws provided against him. By these laws Plato in effect sanctions 'religious persecution', and for this he has suffered blame from modern critics. What he meant to do was to safeguard his city.

Actually, Plato proves in Book 10 of the *Laws* the validity not of the traditional Olympian religion or of the city-state religion, but of his own theological tenets. The immediate purpose for which these tenets are introduced is to support a law, or, rather, a set of laws, to justify them before the tribunal of philosophical Reason, and to convince men by arguments instead of merely threatening them with punishments. It is contrary to the spirit of Plato's legislation and political ideology to rely entirely on authority and power, edict and penalty. Persuasion is invoked throughout the *Laws* to convince the citizens of the intrinsic value and righteousness of the purposes for which the laws are designed.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of such ulterior aims and the politico-legislative framework we may yet assert that the discussion in this Book represents Plato's most straightforward and comprehensive attack on the problem of religion. The divine element is brought in not because it helps to define the status of man, nor because it necessitates the revision of a previously held concept of Reality. Nor does it serve to explain the Cosmos. It is recognized and discussed as a subject in its own right, standing in urgent need of clarification. This Book is a kind of frontal attack on all powers and systems that oppose or damage religion.

The traditional myths and stories, for which the poets are held responsible, are among the influences which Plato combats. 'With reference to the duties of children to their parents I cannot praise them,' says Plato. In terms reminiscent of *Republic* 2 and 3, these tales are said to be neither useful nor 'real', that is, true or adequate to the subject.<sup>6</sup> Yet comparatively little attention is given to this source of corrupted belief although—or, perhaps, because—this was the influence which Plato sought to counteract and render ineffective in the *Republic*. The adversaries against whom Plato turns in *Laws* 10 with the full power of his emotions as well as with the concentrated force of his arguments are the materialistic philosophers. Whether he was right in regarding as materialistic the physicists and cosmologists of the Presocratic era is a question of some importance for the history of early Greek thought; we may consider it open to debate whether the elements

were in these systems actually conceived in such thoroughly materialistic terms and whether they constituted, as he would have us think, their 'absolute'. But clearly for him these theories implied a denial of the existence of God—the true god for whose reality he is going to adduce the strongest arguments. Even so, the materialistic thinkers are responsible for only one type of atheistic doctrine. There are two other types, and Plato is anxious to take account in his refutation of every variety of atheism. The variety may be reduced to three principal types: there are those (and here, as we have seen, he is thinking of the philosophers) who deny outright the existence of divine beings; there are others who, while admitting the existence of gods, yet maintain that they take no interest in human affairs; and there is a third group who suggest that the gods, though interested in things human, may yet be bought off by sacrifices, prayers, and similar bribes.<sup>7</sup> We remember that these same three types of atheistic doctrine were mentioned in *Republic* 2, where they are described as potential and actual sources of immorality and as undermining one of the safeguards of just action (though it is not the safeguard by which Plato himself would set the greatest store). We have seen that in the *Republic* Plato did not attempt to meet these doctrines with definite arguments of his own. It is only in the *Laws* that he makes them the object of a sustained and thorough philosophical refutation.

The materialists are obviously those foes of religion whom Plato takes most seriously. Their concept of 'nature' (*φύσις*) implies that an object is natural if it has originated from the basic material elements, which are, of course, devoid of life. Their materialistic explanations cover meteorological phenomena as well as organic life. Organic entities are mixtures of the original, purely physical elements and qualities. If any other principle besides brute 'Nature' has contributed to their origin, it is Chance—if Chance may be called a principle.<sup>8</sup> Plato's point is that according to the naturalistic theory objects have come about without the help of an intelligent directing principle. To him both 'Nature' and 'Chance' are non-spiritual, and therefore the favorite resorts of atheists. The creative principle that he opposes to them

both is *τέχνη*, conscious and purposeful intelligent activity. The materialists would admit that *τέχνη* is responsible for many phases of civilized life, but for them it comes late in order and is different from, even inferior to, *φύσις*.<sup>9</sup> For in the measure in which civilization and human activities depart from the basis of 'nature', they become 'artificial', and this artificiality involves a lower status or, to put it in modern terms, a lesser degree of reality. 'Artificial' in this sense applies to the arts, the crafts, and all manifestations of human mind and skill, including the art of politics and legislation. Finally, even the gods are said to be artificial, an invention of men, a matter of 'law' and convention (*νόμος*). We note with interest that this assertion is based on the same relationship between the gods and the laws which Plato is so anxious to restore in *Laws* 10. The difference is that the champions of the materialistic doctrine would interpret this relationship as evidence that the gods had actually been created by lawgivers eager to provide a halo for their laws.<sup>10</sup> We recall, in this context, the very daring theories of Critias. Naturally, if this is the right view, the gods cannot in respect of reality compare with those basic materials out of which the physical bodies in the Universe have arisen. Plato's own object will be to show that *τέχνη*, the conscious and purposeful activity of an intelligent being, has a status superior to the material elements.

It appears from this account that the doctrine opposed is a theory of 'evolution'.<sup>11</sup> The adversaries of religion discuss how the world 'became' what it is, distinguishing successive stages in this process of Becoming. Thus Plato can confront their theory with his own system of the world of Becoming, though his is not an evolutionary system, provided 'evolution' means the origin of higher entities out of lower. Plato would rather think of Becoming as a process in the opposite direction, but it is not at all his aim to fix stages in this process. For, as we know, the method by which Plato had conquered the physical world had been the recognition, analysis, and classification of movements. He had distinguished 'forms' of movement, not stages in the process of Becoming. For Plato 'Becoming' itself is a form and a species of Movement. Against the materialists' philosophy of evolution he

sets his classification of movements, which includes a first movement. And it is logical that the first movement is that of the first entity. As his concept of Movement comprehends every kind of change,<sup>12</sup> he is in a position to regard the prime mover or source of movements as the principle of all Becoming. If he can show that the principle that generates all movements is non-material, his opponents' claim for the primacy of material elements will have been discredited. And as we know, the movement recognized as 'first' in Plato's system is the perfect movement, whose nature is such that only an immaterial principle appertaining to the spiritual order can account for it.

The controversy between Plato and the materialists thus narrows down, not so much to two alternative accounts of the origin of things, as rather to the question: What is the origin of all movement, change, and development in the physical world? <sup>13</sup>

It is at this stage of the argument that the comprehensive system and the classification of movements to which we have referred in Chapter V are introduced.<sup>14</sup> The initial distinction is between things which 'stay' and things which 'move' (i. e., change). While it is theoretically impossible that the former class consists of particular objects which do not suffer change—though I am not aware that Plato ever allows a class of this kind—it is equally legitimate and probably wiser to identify it with the unchanging Ideas. The movements next mentioned still contain an element of Rest: they are circular movements around a fixed centre, admirable not only in themselves but also because of the exact proportion that obtains between the movements of concentric circles. Plato then proceeds to record some less remarkable and less harmonious types of locomotion, and works his way from locomotion to other kinds of change, namely the coalescing and dividing of entities, growth, decay, passing from existence, and coming to be. A new criterion is introduced to point the difference between the last two kinds. There is a kind of motion that is capable of imparting itself to other objects but depends on an anterior source; and there is, on the other hand, the first source of all movements, whose nature it is to impart motion both to itself and to other entities. Self-caused movement

can only be the movement of Soul, Plato points out, since the presence or absence of Soul in a body makes the whole difference between its being alive, that is, able to move by its own strength, or dead.<sup>15</sup> In the enumeration of changes which Plato here gives, this kind of movement is designated as the tenth; but in order of existence and ontological priority it would come first, since on it all other movements depend and from it derive their existence. And to show that Soul is the prime mover was, as we know, the aim with which Plato had here embarked on the classification. This is the position from which he can make a stand against all those who maintain the priority of Matter.

It seems clear that Plato had his theory of Soul as prime mover perfectly worked out, and with it in mind had formulated the opposition between his own and the materialistic approach in most radical and uncompromising terms. His description of the materialists' theory may not even be based on one particular system but may be a combined account of characteristic doctrines irrespective of their authorship. However that may be, Plato makes clear that doctrines of the kind were in vogue.<sup>16</sup>

The word *ψυχή* means not only Soul but Life, and hence for modern readers who are apt to be puzzled by Plato's insistence on the priority of 'Soul' we may formulate the problem in terms of 'Life'. The theory to which Plato's adversaries have committed themselves implies that life is late in the process of evolution and that the primary substance out of which everything 'natural' has evolved is of a material kind, void of life. Against them, he asserts that life is basic in the Universe, and his system further differs from theirs in disregarding the evolutionary perspective. To him, the physical world is not a product of evolution but a display of life and of the principle of life. Yet *Psyche*, while the source of life, is at the same time the source and prototype of everything spiritual; and Plato holds that by showing its priority and superiority to the material elements or qualities on which his opponents rest their case, he has established the priority of all things spiritual over Matter.

*Psyche* as Plato conceives of it accounts at the same time for the Life in the Universe and for the reign of Order and Law



throughout it. It was essential that these two functions, which we should normally consider distinct and heterogeneous, should be combined in this principle, and that Psyche should by its nature be able to fulfill both. In justifying Soul as the prime mover, Plato relies on its identity with the principle of Life, pointing out that wherever we see life we say that Soul is present and operating; when he emphasizes its responsibility for the orderly and harmonious nature of the world, he makes use of the close association between Soul and Mind, *ψυχή* and *νοῦς*.<sup>17</sup> This latter aspect of 'Soul' is in an even higher degree than the former the result of his own thinking. It would seem infelicitous to look in Book 10 of the *Laws* for evidence of a principle higher than 'Soul', especially if the search results in the elimination of characteristic features of this account merely to harmonize it with those in *Philebus* and *Timaeus*.<sup>18</sup> In the first and fundamental section of *Laws* 10, Soul is clearly the basic principle of Plato's theology as well as of his cosmology.

'Soul then directs all things in heaven and earth and sea by her movements,'<sup>19</sup> but Soul does not manifest itself with equal distinctness in every phase of the Cosmos. When it is asked what quality of Soul governs the world, the mathematical aspects of the Universe as a whole, the regularity and mathematical perfection of the movements of Sun, Moon and Planets, provide the answer.<sup>20</sup> They are the clearest expression and manifestation of Reason and Mind working for order. Since Perfection and Virtue are the same thing, the Soul or souls which govern the Universe must be absolutely good. We remember that the classification of movements in the preceding section of *Laws* 10 includes a perfect movement at the beginning and another at the end. The latter movement, which is that of the self-moved source of all movements, was described as the movement of Soul, and thus helped Plato to establish Soul as the ruler and basic power in the Cosmos. The former movement was that of circles or spheres around a fixed centre, and it, too, is found in the Platonic Universe.<sup>21</sup> It is the revolution of the outermost Heaven and 'of the things in the Heaven'—a phrase which may include the movements of the planets in their fixed and appointed spheres. These movements

exhibit Sameness and Order in so eminent a degree that they may be regarded as the movements of Mind itself. It is from them that Plato derives his confidence in the essential reasonableness of the ruling Soul. His two approaches to 'perfect movement', though using different criteria and starting from different points, coincide in their results.

It is, however, only the astronomical phase of the Universe from which the 'virtue', goodness, and perfect intelligence of the Soul may be deduced. In other phases of the Universe, in physical processes on this earth, for example, the pattern of numbers is blurred, and mathematical order and regularity are disturbed. Thus Soul, although in the last analysis responsible for every movement in the Cosmos, displays its full power only in the astronomical structure of the outer cosmic regions, and on this ground Plato even considers it possible that Soul inhabits the stars. Possible, but not absolutely necessary. Plato allows a choice among three possibilities: either the soul has its abode in the star and moves it from within, or propels it from without through the agency of some other body or element, or, thirdly, the soul again propels the star from without, but in a less material fashion 'through some extraordinary and wonderful power'.<sup>22</sup>

How then does Soul manifest itself outside these celestial regions and how far does its power reach? Is there a clear distinction between the 'mental' and the 'physical' phase, and do the material forces in Nature follow their own laws unaffected by the ontological priority of the 'mental'? Certainly not. Plato is not the kind of dualist who after making a fundamental division between objects of a higher and of a lower order rejects all influence of the higher on the lower. The initial impulse given by the first mover, Soul, causes and directs the movements which are later in order. The circular movements of the heavenly bodies with their wonderful regularity are the immediate self-expression of Soul where she has not to contend with a heterogeneous power or medium, and these movements are altogether 'psychic' (or 'mental'). Now Plato states that the native movements of soul are called 'will, consideration, attention, deliberation, opinion true and false, joy and sorrow, confidence, fear, hatred, love,'

and the like.<sup>23</sup> But when these 'primary' movements of Soul join to themselves the 'secondary' movements of Body, they 'lead everything to growth and decay, to composition and decomposition, and to the qualities which accompany these, such as heat and cold, heaviness and lightness, hardness and softness, blackness and whiteness, bitterness and sweetness.'<sup>24</sup> What these secondary movements of bodies are Plato fails to define precisely, but it appears that some natural tendencies to movement are present in physical objects. It may be legitimate to identify these physical movements with types included but not elaborated upon in the classification, but I should not regard this as certain. *Timaeus* explains physical entities and processes by the nature and structure of the elements. Yet in this passage of the *Laws* we learn that physical changes and qualities arise when Soul takes charge of the propensities inherent in bodies and gives them direction, form—or whatever it may be, for the particular nature of Soul's contribution to these physical processes is not made entirely clear. All that we can with confidence infer is that the movements and activities of Soul are always in play.<sup>25</sup> We should not do justice to the wording of this passage if we maintained that Soul is limited to giving the first impulse to the various changes which occur in the Universe. The activity of Soul extends farther into the realm of physical events, farther even than is set forth in *Timaeus*. Not that *Timaeus* offers no link at all between material processes and the higher order of immaterial entities. On the contrary, through their peculiar geometrical shapes, the most beautiful that even the divine Mind knows, the atoms of the four elements take part in the order established by the divine Craftsman, and these shapes account for the experiences of the atoms when they enter into mixtures or fusions or are otherwise affected.<sup>26</sup> Thus even that part of the physical Universe in which the teleological principle would seem not to reign is related to Form and to the designs of the Architect. But it is not to the working of the World-Soul that these changes are traced in *Timaeus*; and although we have found a possible link with her in *Timaeus* 58a (see above, p. 115), still what we there read does not bear out the pervasive activity attributed to Soul in *Laws* 10.

In fact, it may be said that if the ideas expressed in these sentences of *Laws* 10 were developed, a system might emerge considerably different from that embodied in *Timaeus*. It did not satisfy Plato to have indicated in the cosmology of *Timaeus* the important part which purposeful Intelligence plays in the organization of the Cosmos. Nor was he content to prove the cosmic primacy of Soul.<sup>27</sup> He goes beyond these positions in asserting that the manifestations of Soul extend throughout the visible world, that nothing happens in which she does not have a part. To be sure, the statement occurs only in the form of a general thesis. There is no detailed account of how Soul enters into all these physical processes, and it is not easy to imagine how the details would be constructed. What we have discussed is merely the program of an idealistic interpretation of Nature, not the actual interpretation itself.

Plato leaves it unsettled whether a single good (and a single bad) Soul, or, rather, a plurality of good (and bad) Souls are at work in the Cosmos, and we feel that 'Soul' here is not, as in *Timaeus*, an individual entity—the one World-Soul—but rather a generic principle. 'Soul' is the exponent and representation of the whole intelligible order.

While the 'good' Soul, in the sense just explained, is responsible for everything that is good, reasonable, and constructive in the Cosmos, a 'bad' Soul is held responsible for whatever works against the complete triumph of the good principle. Nothing is gained by denying that Plato introduces a bad type of Soul and credits it with some influence on what comes about in the world.<sup>28</sup> To be sure, he immediately afterwards points out that the basic facts in the Universe, to wit astronomical events, bear witness to the ascendancy of the reasonable principle which is allied to constructive Mind.<sup>29</sup> Thus, we may be sure, Soul of the good type rules. But Plato seems to grant that in other phases of the Cosmos an evil Soul asserts itself, interferes with the designs of the good Soul, and prevents it from establishing itself in complete control. Plato had never denied that, besides the power which seeks to realize the Good, there is another principle responsible either for what is downright bad or else for the imper-

fect degree in which the Good is realized. He faces the problem of the cause of evil early, in the *Republic*, though his object there is only to make clear that it should not be identified with the gods.<sup>30</sup> In the *Statesman* he opposes the view that evil should be traced to a source of equal rank with the cause of what is good.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, for readers who remember this passage in the *Statesman* the introduction of the bad World-Soul in the *Laws* may come as a shock. They ought not, however, therefore to explain away the bad World-Soul. The theory of 'Necessity' in *Timaeus* is generally regarded as the most characteristic version of Plato's 'dualism', and in rank and dignity 'Necessity' is certainly not on a par with the good principle, which in that work the divine Craftsman represents.<sup>32</sup> Yet, in spite of the elaborate and profound philosophical basis which Plato has provided for this principle of 'Necessity', it is not his last word on the source of evil. In *Laws* 10 he takes the step from which he seems previously to have shrunk, admits the existence of a second soul, or rather a second type of soul, and recognizes large sections of the Cosmos as the theatre of a struggle between the two souls. The dualism thus set forth has a close parallel in the cosmological views of the Persian religion, in which the antagonism between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, the good and the bad principles, is a fundamental dogma. We may be confident that by the time Plato wrote the *Laws* he was familiar with Persian religion, and that this familiarity may indeed have helped him to formulate his theory of the two antagonistic World-Souls. Other members of the Academy went even farther than their master in fusing Platonic conceptions with Persian beliefs.<sup>33</sup> We should, however, mistake Plato's attitude to the Oriental doctrine if we failed to realize that the problem of evil had engaged his attention long before he became acquainted with the Persian solution, that it had an organic and important place in his thought, and that Persian religious dogma merely furnished him with a convenient means of formulating a dualism which he had recognized long before.

In Book 10 of the *Laws* Plato states with great emphasis that by proving the primacy of Soul he has at the same time demonstrated the priority of a number of other spiritual entities and

activities over Matter, material elements, and material processes. In his earlier works he had established the dignity and status of these entities on the ground of their close alliance with the Ideas.<sup>34</sup> In *Laws* 10 they appear rather in the train of Soul, and their status is decided along with that of Soul. 'If the Soul is older than the body, must not the things which are of the soul's kindred necessarily be prior to those which appertain to the body? Then thought and mind and administration and art and law will be prior to that which is hard and soft and heavy and light.' Or again, 'characters and morals, wishes and reasonings, true opinions, reflections, and recollections are prior to length and breadth and depth and strength of bodies.'<sup>35</sup> Everywhere in the Cosmos and in human life Soul takes precedence over body and matter. It is her activities that count. This point is emphasized in the *Laws* even more than in *Timaeus*, and it may well be maintained that the cosmological system of *Timaeus* in some respects falls short of what is asserted here.<sup>36</sup> Thought, art, law, intellectual activities, and moral qualities are in the *Laws* declared to be ontologically, cosmologically, and axiologically prior to material entities and processes, and to the qualities of spatial extension. The properties of matter are not explained away as in Berkeley's system, but degraded to a role of secondary importance in the Universe.<sup>37</sup> To the radically idealistic organization of the State set forth in the *Republic* Plato now adds the idealistic organization of the Cosmos. Because, however, of the different nature of the Cosmos, its organization had to take a different form, and Soul, not the Ideas, had to become the principle explaining everything truly valuable. If 'idealism' asserts the primacy of Soul or Mind, then *Laws* 10 is the first great 'idealistic' manifesto of this type, fundamental and uncompromising. We shall later see that even the right structure of the State might at this stage appear to Plato as a particular instance of the order prevailing in the Universe. Yet this manifesto of objective idealism is at the same time a manifesto of astral religion.

Everything in human life that from Plato's point of view is valuable—ethics, statesmanship, knowledge, law, art—is here related to Soul, and shares the exalted position and high ontological

rank assigned to Soul. To make any of these items dependent on, or to derive its existence from, material objects or conditions would be preposterous, since it would make what is prior and primary dependent on what is later and secondary.

Knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) and true craftsmanship (*τέχνη*) had long been recognized by Plato as human functions of high standing.<sup>38</sup> Their worth rested on their orientation towards unchanging Being and on their affinity to the realm of Ideas. In *Laws* 10 the same high standing is secured for them on the strength of their relationship with Soul, while Soul's own position no longer needs to be fortified by a reference to its kinship with the Forms. Like Soul herself, Knowledge and Craftsmanship have now a cosmic status. They are forces operating in the wide theatre of the Universe and manifesting themselves there at large in ways analogous to their manifestations in human and political life. Or, we may say, the human activities which bear the same names are particular instances and individual actualizations of the cosmic activities of these spiritual forces.

Among the functions of Soul there are some about whose philosophical status we should, on the whole, feel less assured than we are about that of Knowledge, Artisan-ship, and Soul herself. Opinions, desires, emotions were not always included by Plato among the worthier activities of Man. Yet they may, especially in Plato's later thought, be considered as integral phases of Soul. There are links and there is continuity between the ideal Soul and less perfect souls or, what comes to the same thing, between the perfect and ruling part of Soul and her less perfect parts. From *Phaedrus* we may learn that if the method of diaeresis and division into species is applied, the lower 'forms' or parts (*εἶδη*) of Soul are seen to be integral in the comprehensive Form of Soul, and we know that it is a characteristic tendency of Plato's later thought to recognize even imperfection and deterioration as necessary phases of Being.<sup>39</sup> Even emotions and desires (*ἐπιθυμίας*) have their place in the structure of Soul, partake of its reality, and stand in a clear relation to the supremely valuable faculty of Reason and Thought through which Soul communes with the eternal values.

'Law' (*νόμος*) too has a place in the following of Soul. It is something spiritual, not physical or artificial. We should not forget that the book with which we are dealing is a part of the *Laws*; and though the original legislative purpose may seem to have been forgotten during the discussion of religion, actually it has never been completely out of sight. We shall revert to this subject.<sup>40</sup>

Let us again state the proposition: Plato insists on the primacy, supremacy, and key-position of his spiritual principle throughout the Cosmos. In addition, he vindicates the autonomy of intellectual, moral, political, and artistic activities—all of which are either identical or associated with phases of the spiritual realm as we find them enumerated in a most important passage (see p. 143). That there was some connection between the deity and the 'mind of man' had been felt by earlier philosophers. Of the thinkers whom we have discussed in the chapter on the Defense and Reconstruction of Religion, some had elevated the divine *νοῦς* so far above the physical world that it lost all direct contact with this world; others had identified it with one of the elements, in particular with the ether.<sup>41</sup> The latter position seems to have been taken if *νοῦς* had to account for Life, the former if it was held responsible for Order. Plato's divine principle is active throughout the physical world, and yet remains totally different from its material components. It is productive of life, and at the same time the source of order, form, and law. And while it reigns in the physical world all the cultural activities of man, all manifestations of man's intellect and character are also 'of its kin.'

Plato would agree that 'the Heavens declare the glory of God,' but for him the values of the moral world, the works of the genius, the leadership of the true statesman also declare God's glory. All forces opposed to the extravagant claims of 'natural evolution' or determinism, whether of the physical or the economic kind, may gather behind Plato's name and may with every right claim his backing. History has brought more than one revival of his attitude, though the history of thought offers the curious spectacle of periods in which Mind voluntarily surren-



ders its prior rights to its antagonists, physical and materialistic doctrines, the economic situation, natural evolution. In one of these periods we seem to be living to-day, and we need not feel bewildered if people who forget that economic determinism, 'evolution', physical causality, 'complexes', are after all concepts of the Mind,<sup>42</sup> indulge in intellectual suicide and reduce Mind itself to a secondary and derivative position. The same people may well maintain that Plato has 'nothing to say' to us, though if they hesitate to go so far, that is to their credit. There are others, and they will hardly die out, who still feel that things of the Mind—poetry, art, thought, social, political, scientific ideas, no matter whether past or present—have their own independent value, and that it is the most genuine and legitimate interest of Mind to devote itself to what is of its own nature.

## NOTES

1 *Tim.* 28 c. (Against the attempts to harmonize the various approaches see my remarks above, p. 113.) While I agree with Cornford, *Cosmology*, pp. 34-9, Grube, *op. cit.*, p. 163, and other scholars that the Demiurge is a 'mythical' character and not to be regarded as a Platonic 'dogma', I should yet insist that none of his approaches to the problem of the deity is in any way final or dogmatic. It is understandable that modern scholars are more impressed by the discussion which leads to the assumption of a divine Soul as the source of movements, because such a discussion has a 'scientific' character, and to-day we take science more seriously than myths. But Plato nowhere tells us that he finds more force or truth in science than in myths; *Timaeus* rather suggests that for him they are on a par. See also below, Note 18.

2 *Legg.* 10. 887 c.

3 885 b. See below, p. 162.

4 I have no desire to minimize the importance of passages like *Rep.* 4. 427 b-c; 7. 540 b-c. Consultation of an oracle seems to be implied also in 5. 470 a. This practice is in keeping with the traditional policy of Greek states. For the references to oracles in the *Laws* cf. H. W. Parke, *op. cit.* (Chapter I, Note 12), p. 416, and Georges Daux in *Athenian Studies presented to William Scott Ferguson* (Harv. Stud. in Class. Phil., Suppl. vol. i, 1940), pp. 37 ff., esp. p. 58.

5 The specific 'laws' are generally preceded by proems whose object is *πειθῶ*; see e. g. 4. 718 c-d, 730 b, 723 a. Cf. Shorey, *What Plato Said*, pp. 372, 631 (on 718 c-d).

6 886 c. Cf. above, p. 63 on *Euthyphro*, p. 66 on the *Republic*.

7 885 b. Cf. 885 d, 886 d-e, 88 c; *Rep.* 2. 365 d-e.

8 889 a-890 a.

9 *φύσει καὶ τέχνη*: 889 a; b-c. *τέχνη* is secondary and its products less valid; see 888 a-e, 889 a. Contrast Plato's own views 890 a, 892 b; *Soph.* 265 e.

10 Compare or contrast: the atheists say the gods are *οὐ φύσει ἀλλὰ τισιν*

νόμοις (889 e); Plato is indignant that θεοὶ οἷός τε νόμοις προστάττει διανοεῖσθαι δεῖν (890 a; cf. 885 b) should be questioned.

11 Cornford, *Cosmology*, p. 165. Cf. Paul Elmer More, *The Religion of Plato* (Princeton, 1921), p. 117; Diès, *op. cit.*, p. 531; see also Moreau's excellent comments, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

12 I am not sure that Professor Demos (*op. cit.*, p. 80) is sufficiently aware of this fact.

13 891 e. I do not suggest, either here or later, that the priority under discussion is a temporal or chronological priority. 895 a-b shows that chronological priority may be used as an illustration of ontological priority; under certain hypothetical conditions ontological priority would appear in the form of temporal priority. W. F. R. Hardie in *A Study in Plato* (Oxford, 1936), p. 151, takes a different view, but seems to me to overlook the hypothetical quality of the sentence.

14 893 b. For good comments on the classification of movements see M. Gueroult, 'Le X<sup>e</sup> Livre des Lois et la dernière Forme de la Physique Platonicienne', *Rev. des études grec.* 37 (1924). 33.

15 895 c; cf. *Phaedr.* 245 e; *Phaed.* 105 c ff.

16 Cf. my comments on J. Tate's views in *T. A. P. A.* 67 (1936). 209, n. 5. I must, however, admit that 888 e is an important passage.

17 Compare from this point of view 895 c with 898 a-c.

18 Reginald Hackforth in *Class. Quart.* 30 (1936) 4-9. I am indebted to this suggestive paper but my remarks (p. 161) will indicate the reasons why I cannot accept Professor Hackforth's conclusions. I admit, however, that in *Legg.* 10 Plato does not commit himself definitely—as definitely as in *Timaeus*—to the theory of one World-Soul. This very fact should be a warning against attempts to harmonize at all costs. In *Epist.* 6. 323 d Plato refers to two divine principles. We are tempted to identify the god who is described as πάντων . . . ἡγεμὼν τῶν τε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων with the World-Soul (cf. *Legg.* 10. 896 d f.), and the other divine principle with the νοῦς or Demiurge. This explanation would bring the passage closer to *Timaeus* than to the *Laws*. But the passage is rather obscure, and the explanation just given is by no means so cogent that we could confidently uphold it.

19 896 e.

20 897 b ff., especially 898 c. Notice the very emphatic assertion of the element of Sameness and ἀνά λόγον in these movements (898 a-b).

21 898 a; cf. 893 c.

22 898 e-899 a; cf. Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (tr. by Richard Robinson, Oxford, 1934), p. 142.

23 896 e-897 a.

24 897 a.

25 Cf. the words ἀγχι μὲν δὴ ψυχὴ πάντα (896 e) and a little later (897 a 5) ἀγοῦσι πάντα. The physical processes and qualities enumerated in 897 a are discussed in the so-called second part of *Timaeus* (see especially 56 c-68 d), where they are explained on the basis of the geometrical structure of the elementary bodies without reference to ψυχή.

26 *Tim.* 53 c ff., 55 d ff., 56 c ff. See for a comparison between the physical systems of *Timaeus* and *Laws* 10 Gueroult, *loc. cit.* (see above, Note 14), pp. 43-78. I cannot fully agree with Gueroult's conclusions, but he seems to me to have seen the problems more clearly than anyone else.

27 See above, Chapter V, especially p. 89.

28 The words πλείους and δυοῖν . . . ἔλαττον μηδὲν τιθώμεν (896 e) are very closely connected with the preceding sentence; thus it should be clear that the

second World-Soul is active and where it is active. Nor is it afterwards questioned that there is room for her activity (notice what *ψυχὴ ἀνοία συγγενομένη* is said to do and what means or instruments she is supposed to employ: 897 a-b; cf. also 898 b, 906 a). It is however pointed out that this Soul is not in charge of the Cosmos as a whole, especially that she has no power (*ἐγκρατής*) over the movements of the Heaven and the heavenly bodies. Similarly, the 'errant cause' of *Timaeus* has no power to affect these movements, but asserts itself sufficiently elsewhere. For a different view see, e. g., Grube, *op. cit.*, p. 146. See also Burnet, *Greek Philosophy* 1. 335.

29 898 a-c; cf. 896 e ff., 897 c.

30 Rep. 2. 379 b ff.; see above, p. 68. Cf. Demos, *op. cit.*, p. 116, for a full list of the passages in which the problem of evil is treated.

31 *Polit.* 270 a.

32 See above, p. 105.

33 Cf. Jaeger, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 f. For Xenocrates see Richard Heinze, *Xenocrates* (Leipzig, 1892), pp. 29-34. There is room, however, for a new investigation, especially of Plutarch's debt to Xenocrates.

34 This applies in particular to *νοῦς* and *μνήμη*. It is noteworthy that *ἐπιστήμη* is not mentioned at either 892 b or 896 c-d. But can it be doubtful that *ἐπιστήμη* belongs to the family of Soul? Its place seems to be occupied, and its field may be covered, partly by *νοῦς*, partly by *τέχνη* and partly even by *δόξα* (which at 896 d is qualified as *ἀληθής*; see, however, 892 b). In a context like this, where the stress lies on the contrast between the intellectual and the physical, *δόξα* is naturally included with the former and its status is, or seems to be, higher than it would be in a different context. See also *Legg.* 2. 653 a; 3. 688 b.

35 892 a-b, 896 c-d.

36 The sentence 896 e ff. would suggest that even those physical processes which in *Tim.* 56 c ff. are explained with the help of the *τρίγωνα* should be related to *ψυχή*.

37 *δευτεροῦργοι κινήσεις*: 897 a.

38 Cf. Ast's *Index s. v. νοῦς, ἐπιστήμη, τέχνη*; see especially *Rep.* 5-7 *passim*. In *Legg.* 11. 921 b Plato calls *τέχνη* a *σαφὲς καὶ ἀψευδὲς φύσει πρᾶγμα*, and this may well always have been Plato's view even though he likes to point out the limitations of individual *τέχναι* (see *Euthyd.* 288 d). For *δόξα* cf. Notes 34 and 39.

39 Since we lack for *Phaedrus* a commentary of the same quality as those which Professor Cornford has published on other late dialogues, I can only state it as my opinion that 237 d is fully borne out by 255 c ff. and 271 a ff. Each of these passages shows, though each in a different way, that Plato recognizes the 'lower' parts of Soul as essential and integral phases of her *εἶδος*. From recent studies of *Theaetetus* it becomes increasingly clear that Plato here recognizes both *αἰσθήσεις* and *δόξα* within their limited rights. See Stenzel, *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, pp. 62 ff., 107 ff., 117 ff.; Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge, passim*. See also *Tim.* 37 b; *Legg.* 1. 636 d-e; 2. 653 a-b; 3. 688 b; and especially *Epist.* 7. 342 c.

40 892 b; contrast 889 d-e. See below, p. 163.

41 See above, pp. 52 f.

42 I do not, of course, credit Plato with this variety of 'idealism'.

## GOD AND THE INDIVIDUAL. TELEOLOGY AND PROVIDENCE

THE second item in Plato's program was to prove that the gods concern themselves with human affairs. We remember that what prompted him to embark on such a proof was the denial of divine Providence, which had struck him as one of the basic forms of atheism. His own new concept of the Deity in terms of the World-Soul and his deification of the stars would hardly seem to lead by a direct path to a discussion of this problem. And if it is true that his theology took shape in connection with an inquiry into the nature, status, and types of cosmic change this inquiry would scarcely be the most appropriate starting point for an argument in support of Providence. Actually it would be a mistake to suggest that what Plato now proceeds to prove is that the World-Soul takes an interest in human affairs. In the second section of *Laws* 10 he does not appear to be thinking of either the World-Soul or star-gods.<sup>1</sup> Of the various conclusions reached in the first part only one or two will be utilized in the second. One is the certainty that God is good. Soul, as we have seen, was considered responsible for both good and evil, but the soul in power is the good one, to whose supremacy the order of the firmament and the regularity of celestial movements bear witness. But that the Deity is good had always been one of Plato's fundamental convictions, and long before committing himself to the doctrine of the World-Soul he had felt sure enough of this proposition to make it the basis for further assertions about the divine nature and the mode of divine operation. This is a recurrent feature of Plato's theological discussions, an axiom to which he clings more tenaciously than to any specific view concerning God's nature or activity. His spe-

cific views vary as we have seen, and largely depend on the context. They are never final. But in whatever terms Plato may describe God, his goodness is always beyond question. We should therefore beware of thinking that the axiom, God is good, presupposes the World-Soul or any other specifically Platonic conception that forms a part of the first argument.

The connection between the first proof and the following is, then, far from close. Again our question is: how does Plato proceed to satisfy himself that God or the gods are interested in human affairs? As we have seen, he regards it as beyond doubt that the gods are good in respect of every excellence, and also that they 'have the administration of all things' as their proper and becoming task (good). Their 'goodness' excludes every possible negligence or self-indulgence. For 'good' to Plato, and to the Greeks generally, is not an exclusively moral notion; it denotes every kind of excellence and perfection. Any suggestion that the gods might not have power to extend their benevolent care and interest to a vast number of different things would imply doubt concerning their perfection. It is the nature of a perfect and perfectly good being to have unlimited abilities and to live up to his abilities. Those who deny or question either part of this proposition show thereby that their concept of the divinity is not sufficiently sublime and exalted. There is here no thought of a secondary principle hindering the process of divine administration; such a principle seems simply not to belong in this context.

In this connection, living beings are called the 'property' of the gods,<sup>2</sup> a view that Plato endorses in the section of *Phaedo* which reflects the atmosphere and teachings of the mysteries; and we may take it that the mystery-religions too inspired their adherents with confidence that they were cared for by the gods. That even 'small things' like human affairs will not be neglected is a point of sufficient importance for Plato to merit specific arguments.<sup>3</sup> He reasons that in the measure in which things become smaller and less important it becomes easier for the all-powerful being to take care of them. On the other hand, human beings belong to the part of creation that is endowed with Soul.

Therefore, presumably they are not really unimportant. Lastly, a 'Whole', in order to be in the proper state itself, must have all its parts, large and small, in good condition, functioning properly, and contributing to the perfection of the entire organism. The basis of this thought is the peculiar Platonic concept of a 'Whole';<sup>4</sup> the same concept will presently reappear as an essential phase of a somewhat different approach to divine activity and Providence. Thus it is proved, in principle at least, that human life, however slight and poor it may be, comes within the sphere of divine concern, though we are still free to wonder whether and how far divine interest extends to the minutiae of our earthly existence. It is not Plato's view that the gods actually direct our actions. Nor does he suggest that they give us our deserts before our life is completed.

What prompts some people to question the gods' concern with humanity is, according to Plato, the apparent lack of immanent Justice in this world, and in particular the impression that wickedness prospers. We know this point of view from our study of Greek tragedy and are not surprised that Plato too uses the successful wickedness of the tyrant as a particularly glaring instance of triumphant Injustice. People who have witnessed this and similar instances have 'as in a mirror seemed to see the universal neglect of the gods.'<sup>5</sup> We shall presently learn how Plato meets such arguments.

It is not in so many words said that the school of thought with which Plato is joining issue holds that an interest in human affairs is beneath the gods, and that the Godhead is simply too great and sublime to attend to poor mortal creatures. But, since in refuting his adversaries Plato lays particular stress on the point that small things too are objects of divine care, we may infer that the contrast between divine greatness and human smallness had been emphasized to discredit the idea of divine Providence. From later thought we are familiar with the argument that it is precisely God's greatness and sublimity which prevent him from condescending to interest himself and participate in things human.<sup>6</sup> It is important to realize that with such a concept of divine goodness or greatness Plato is entirely out of sympathy.

He does not know of a self-centred and introspective goodness, and the Aristotelian conception of a self-sufficient God who contemplates only himself is entirely alien to Plato. For Plato the good is by nature creative and dynamic, and naturally affects and shapes reality at large. In the section of the *Republic* in which Plato seeks to purify and exalt traditional Greek views of the divine nature and its manifestations,<sup>7</sup> the subject of divine Providence is not discussed; but the argument of the second part of *Laws* 10 breathes the same spirit as the expurgatory section of the *Republic*. Plato's train of thought is here purely logical in the sense that certain theological propositions are by a kind of dialectical analysis deduced from the concept of the Deity as such, rather than based on a particular theory about the nature of the divine principle.

We may add, by way of anticipation, that the refutation of the third doctrine, that the gods, though interested in things human, may be bought off by bribes and sacrifices, is constructed along similar lines. The view rejected is again shown to be fundamentally inconsistent with the goodness and dignity of divine beings, though the precise nature of these divine beings is again left out of consideration.<sup>8</sup> What matters is that they are excellent and excellently qualified for their office as judges and guardians. The phrasing of the third refutation is less abstract and less logical than that of the second. Plato drives his point home by using similes and appealing to experiences and situations familiar from human and professional life.

There is, however, inserted between the second and the third refutation, a thought of a somewhat different nature.<sup>9</sup> This passage belongs with Plato's second proof, but has not the character of a proof itself but rather that of an exhortation, a friendly lesson administered to a youth in whom, as a prospective citizen, the seeds of atheism must be extirpated. This form is employed to reinforce, by gentler means, the preceding argument. Yet, somewhat to our surprise, we get in this section glimpses of a rather different approach to the nature of the deity and his work. In the preceding paragraphs (which we have examined above, p. 150) the emphasis was entirely on the proposition that God

or the gods take care of everything, including human beings. Now it is pointed out that their care has a specific end in view. This end is the perfection or best possible condition of the 'Whole', the sum of things. The parts are not there for their own good nor is the Whole for the good of the parts, but the parts are there for the Whole, and the only criterion by which we should judge the fate and experience of the parts is the perfection of the Whole.<sup>10</sup> Plato's intention is to convince the youth that such grievances or doubts concerning divine Providence as he may entertain are the result of the limited range of his vision. The youth presumes to take the Deity to task if he is allotted less happiness than he thinks he deserves; he regards his own well-being as the end towards which God must have worked, instead of regarding himself as a small and unimportant particle in the vast order of things, and admitting that what is an unwelcome experience to him may yet have beneficial results in the economy of the Whole. In other words, the belief in divine Justice is warranted as soon as we do not look for it within too narrow a sphere. Plato insists that where man habitually tries to find divine Providence, that is, in the individual human life, he cannot expect to find it. To find it at work in the wider reaches to which Plato refers us may be beyond human power. Nor does Plato himself make an attempt to assess or specify the good that may accrue to the Whole from what for the individual is merely an unpleasant and, to the best of his conscience and insight, undeserved experience. But at least the outlines, the general scheme that God follows in the administration of the whole may be understood by human beings. It is at this point that the results of the preceding inquiry into the nature of the divinity bear upon the topic of divine Justice. God does not concern himself with physical or material things but with Soul alone.<sup>11</sup> To treat souls according to their quality and merits and to give them a status corresponding to the degree of their goodness is the only function suitable for God in a universe in which the absolute priority of Soul in every respect has been proved and the good soul shown to be in power.

Before we go into the details of the treatment of souls, let



us make some few comments on the concepts of God and the Whole which we find in this section. The god who orders and arranges everything with the good of the Whole in view and who assigns to all souls their proper status is not himself a soul. It may be that Plato felt such an activity to be inconsistent with the immanence of Soul in the world. More generally, *ψυχή* is never by Plato treated as the designer and architect of the teleological world-order. Along with the reappearance of the teleological scheme (which closely resembles that of *Timaeus*) there reappears also the divine Craftsman.<sup>12</sup> There are still some references to the 'care of the gods' but the truly active power whose working is explained is 'our king', the 'administrator of the whole' (*ἐπιμελούμενος*: masculine singular!). He is also described in a Heraclitean term as the 'dice-player' (*πεπτευτής*), and he is said to be intent on rearranging the parts of his realm.<sup>13</sup> The proposition that in all his actions he keeps his eyes fixed on the improvement, the increase of value in the Whole is supported by remarks concerning the procedure of human craftsmen (*δημιουργοί*) like the physician who does not give his attention to a single, isolated organ, but rather to the body as a whole.<sup>14</sup> Thus we find ourselves, in this interlude, confronted with a set of ideas closely resembling the system of *Timaeus*. It is the divine Mind, not the World-Soul, which produces the proper structure of the Universe and effects the just distribution in it. We have learned that Soul when working for the Good takes Mind along as her ally,<sup>15</sup> and the more attention, in the intervening argument, became focused on the care and providence of the gods, the more it became necessary that the character of the divine ruler should be conceived in terms of Mind rather than of Soul. If a further explanation is needed for the fact that in the present passage Plato speaks so frankly of the divine Demiurge, it may be found in the change of literary form and atmosphere from philosophical reasoning to pedagogical exhortation addressed to a youth.<sup>16</sup> It is at the same time a change from dialogue to myth, and the content of this myth is of a piece with the myth in *Timaeus*.

The idea that in the organized Universe the parts exist for the whole is completely in keeping with the description in

*Timaeus*, for in *Timaeus* too the teleological scheme is not constructed around the concept of the individual's well-being. What the Demiurge of *Timaeus* is anxious to strengthen is the 'Good', the mind-like factors in the world, which are akin to his own nature and will improve the status of the entire Cosmos.<sup>17</sup> It is legitimate to say that nowhere in *Timaeus* is the centralized structure of Plato's teleological World-order so plainly and emphatically brought out as in these few sentences of *Laws* 10. Fundamentally, however, the concept of cosmic purpose and organization is the same in both works, and in *Timaeus* too Plato includes, though with less emphasis, the eschatological phase, the promotion or degradation of souls according to their deserts. In *Laws* 10 such promotions or degradations seem to be almost the only way in which the divine administrator improves conditions in his Universe of souls.

'You do not seem to be aware that every creation is for the sake of the Whole and in order that happy existence may accrue to the life of the Whole, and that the Whole has not been created for your sake, but you for the sake of the Whole.'<sup>18</sup> Reading this sentence we can hardly fail to recall the similar centralization of Plato's political structure. For in the *Republic* too it is said that the happiness of individuals or even of a group counts for less than the happiness and excellence of the whole, of the whole body politic, that is, and sacrifices are demanded and expected of the individual in the interest of the Whole.<sup>19</sup> It is not too much to say that in *Laws* 903 Plato thinks of the cosmic Whole in terms of the ideal Greek city and that this most radical formulation of his teleology has derived its essential features from his political philosophy. The word *εὐδαιμονία* which Plato uses to describe the best condition of the Universe is perfectly appropriate, but may nevertheless remind us of a somewhat analogous discussion at the beginning of Book 4 of the *Republic*, in which the 'happiness' of a particular class is said to be less important than that of the whole community. Mutual harmony, coöperation, the self-effacing service of the individual for the good of the community had become realities for the Greeks first and foremost in their political experience. From this sphere

the concepts had been transferred to the Cosmos.<sup>20</sup> And the development of Plato's thought follows in this respect the course and direction of Greek thought in general.

The passage which we are discussing is the prototype of Stoic teleology. It may also be its fountainhead. Certainly it helps us to understand why the teleologically constructed Cosmos (ἡ τοῦ κόσμου πολιτεία, an analogy to the human πολιτεία) could for the Stoics replace the State. *Laws* 10 is but one book out of twelve; and since the theme of the whole work is legislation, it would be rash—indeed wrong—to suggest that Plato in his old age felt more at home in the Cosmos than in the Polis. The relationship between Cosmos and State in Plato's later philosophy is a subject to which we shall return; at present it will be enough to realize that Plato prepared the way, though he did not tread it himself, for the Hellenistic escape from politics into the Cosmos. The passage which we have discussed is cosmopolitan, if to think of the Cosmos in terms of the Polis is cosmopolitanism.

The activities assigned to the divine Craftsman are in *Laws* 10. 903, even more definitely than in *Timaeus*, determined by Plato's conviction of the priority and supreme importance of Psyche and whatever forms part of her reign. Unmistakably the description and proof of her supremacy which we read a few pages back now determine the account of the Craftsman's procedure. About material forces in the Universe the Craftsman obviously does not bother at all.<sup>21</sup> The more he concerns himself with souls. Human souls are again allowed the choice between rising and falling. This choice takes the form, though perhaps not always, of reaction to the influences to which a particular soul is exposed. All that God does is to treat human souls according to their merits, setting those with a creditable record in a position superior, and those with a less creditable record in a position inferior to that previously occupied.<sup>22</sup> Both good and bad have their assigned 'place' in the world which he controls. This god is not the author of Life, nor is he, like the World-Soul in the description which we read earlier in the book, involved in and responsible for the physical processes of the Universe. It is a purely 'psychic' or panpsychistic world of which he is in charge,

a world without clear material outlines or structure. There are references, it is true, to the lower and, by implication, to the higher regions of the Cosmos, but these scarcely provide a real physical background for what may well be called the law of psychic gravity and attraction. The idea is that worthier souls will rise to the astral regions, while those of the opposite type sink downwards to Hades or even deeper.<sup>23</sup> If anything happens in the world other than this exchange of place between souls Plato and his god seem to be indifferent to it.

The whole account of God's care for individual souls still forms a part of the exhortation addressed to the youth. Nor has Plato forgotten this; on the contrary he emphasizes the protreptic and pedagogic tendency of this section in the very next sentences, in which he again addresses the youth. He now insists that the conditions just described, a world in which the difference between Good and Bad is of fundamental, nay even cosmic importance, and the awareness of a divine purpose, remote but all the more inclusive, should allay whatever misgivings about divine Providence the youth may entertain. These misgivings arise only while he allows himself to be unduly impressed by the superficial lack of balance between human actions and human experiences.<sup>24</sup> If he regards the situation at close range, individuals may seem to escape the punishment they deserve for their misdoings; they may even seem to enjoy their unmerited gains in security. But a person who takes such a narrow view is simply not qualified to pass judgment.

The concept of a balance effected in afterlife and, more generally, the doctrine of the soul's successive lives are clearly adaptations of the tenets of Greek mystery-religion. We know that Plato carried on this tradition, raising the ideas of the mysteries to a higher and more philosophical plane.<sup>25</sup> The purified doctrine of the mysteries is one of Plato's approaches to the religious problem, but it is only in *Laws* 10 that we find this approach coördinated with his others, and it is noteworthy that the previous discussion, revolving as it did round the status of Soul, has provided a new basis for the teachings of mystery-religion. There is a further difference. In Plato's earlier works the reader

is aware of a marked change of atmosphere when he passes from the ethical, political, in a word the secular arguments of the dialogue—say in *Gorgias* or the *Republic*—into the eschatological realm of myth and mystery-religion. But in Book 10 of the *Laws*, the eschatological theme of the migration of souls and of the changes in their status is no longer a heterogeneous element, but the logical sequel to the exposition of Plato's philosophical physics and cosmology. It is fully in harmony with them. Since the position of Psyche in the Cosmos has been, so to speak, scientifically established and has become the basis of theology as well as cosmology, changes in the status of individual souls can now be understood against this background.<sup>26</sup>

That the ways of God are too difficult for man to comprehend and that a single human life is too short to show the working of divine Justice were messages which the Greeks had formerly received from their poets, in particular from Solon and Aeschylus. But the poets had thought in terms of successive generations and had viewed the individual as, so to speak, continuing his existence in his children and grandchildren.<sup>27</sup> What Plato—like the mysteries—teaches, the continued existence of souls after bodily death, is something altogether different; and we readily understand that as soon as the concept is brought to bear on the old problem, the perspective changes completely and a new solution is found. When Plato urges the youth to look beyond the limits of his own life in his search for a divine Providence, this advice may on the surface resemble the teachings of Solon and Aeschylus, but its meaning and implications are quite different. Plato is as emphatic as anyone ever was in asserting that divine Justice and Providence watch over every individual's life and take notice of his actions.<sup>28</sup> The basis of *his* assertion is his teleological concept of the 'Whole'. He need not, as former teleologists had done, shift the discussion of a divine plan from the individual life to human life in general,<sup>29</sup> because he knows that in the teleological scheme nothing is more essential and nothing more precious than individual souls. It is only in his system that teleology and philosophy of nature are in a position to face the problem of a divine Providence that takes genuine interest in

every human being. Clearly neither a materialistic nor a naturalistic approach to the Universe could reach a satisfactory solution of the question. Plato is as far from any thought of accepting the naturalistic gospel of the right of the stronger as the last word about human affairs, as he is from the modern view in which Nature appears altogether indifferent to Justice and Injustice while the task of creating conditions more satisfactory to our moral sense devolves on man himself and on man alone.

## NOTES

1 If the connection between this section and the preceding is closer than it appears to me to be, it would be well to bear in mind that for the relation between the divine souls and the stars Plato allows a choice among three possible theories. Still anyone who holds that the first and the second section of Plato's theology are completely coördinated would have to regard the second as an astrological treatise showing that man is under the care of the stars.

2 *Legg.* 10. 902 b-c. See also 906 a; *Critias* 109 b. Cf. above, p. 124.

3 See especially 902 c-903 a. Cf. More, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

4 902 d. See also *Parm.* 137 c, 145 d f.; *Phaedr.* 264 c; *Rep.* 4. 420 b. Cf. Ast's *Index s. v.* ὅλος.

5 905 b; cf. above, p. 25.

6 See the passages mentioned in More, *op. cit.*, p. 141, n. 3; Shorey, *What Plato Said*, p. 644.

7 Cf. Chapter IV, especially p. 68.

8 905 d-907 b.

9 903 b ff.

10 903 b-d. How God uses the parts to improve the Whole is described in 904 b. Wilamowitz's emendations, in *Plato* (Berlin, 1919) 2. 404 f., seem convincing and should be taken into account.

11 See especially 903 d-904 b and again 904 c-905. On 903 e-904 a see below, p. 156.

12 See 903 b: τῷ τοῦ παντὸς ἐπιμελουμένῳ; cf. the reference to πᾶς δημιουργός (c 5).

13 Administrator (ἐπιμελούμενος): 903 b, 904 a; king (βασιλεὺς): 904 a; dice-player (πεπτευτής): 903 d. Cf. Heracl., *Frag.* 52 (Diels-Kranz).

14 E. B. England's explanation of 903 c 5 ff. in *The Laws of Plato* (Manchester, 1921) is not fully convincing.

15 897 b (see above, p. 138).

16 See for this change the last sentence of 903 a and the first of 903 b (τῷ . . . τινῶν; notice ἐπιδῶν . . . μύθων and πείθωμεν τὸν νεανίαν). Cf. Otfried Becker in *Götting. Gel. Anz.* 200 (1938), p. 359. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 493, fails to pay attention to this fact.

17 See above, p. 104. Cf. also the description of the fate of individual souls after their incorporation in a human body, *Tim.* 42 b f., 91 d ff.; the description does not agree with the details of *Legg.* 10. 904 c 6 ff., but both passages show the same tendency to connect this subject with the general cosmic scheme.

18 903 c.

19 See *Rep.* 4. 420 b-421 d, but also 7. 519 e ff.

20 Cf. Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 107 f., 157-9 for the notion of Cosmos in general and for Anaximander, *Frag. B 1* in particular. See also Eur., *Phoen.* 535-48; Plato, *Gorg.* 507 e f.

21 903 d ff. The sentence (903 e: *εἰ μὲν γάρ . . .*) in which Plato contrasts the rearrangements carried out by his divine administrator with a hypothetical alternative procedure is as it stands hardly intelligible. To bring out the contrast it is probably necessary to incorporate after *μὲν γάρ* the *μή* of Laur. 85. 9. In addition, since 'living water' (*ὕδωρ ἐμψυχόν*) makes no sense and Taylor's suggestion in *The Laws of Plato translated into English* (London, 1934), p. 297, n. 1, is unconvincing, we may either with Badham put the comma after *καὶ μή* instead of after *ἐμψυχόν*, or supply *ἐμψυχόν* <τ' ἐξ ἀψύχου>, which would be another instance of a change necessary to assume if the adversaries' (i. e., the evolutionists') view were correct. One of the main difficulties lies in the fact that it is not clear which of the two alternative theories suggests a creation or change of *σύμπελλα ἐξ ἐνὸς ἢ ἐκ πολλῶν ἐν*.

22 903 d, 904 b, 904 c ff. Man's own choice ('wish') or his reaction to the influences of other *ψυχαί* determines his status: 903 d 5, 904 b 8 ff., d 4 ff.

23 904 b-e. Cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 493, and *The Laws of Plato translated into English* (London, 1934), p. lv.

24 904 e ff.; compare 905 b with 899 d ff.

25 Cf. Chapter VII.

26 Cf. Paul Stöcklein, *Ueber die philosophische Bedeutung von Platons Mythen* in *Philologus, Supplementband* 30. 3 (1937). 31-3. The 'cosmic' background of the eschatological myths of *Phaedo* and the *Republic* is of a different type.

27 See above, p. 24.

28 See especially 905 a-c.

29 For discussions as to whether *τὰ χρηστά* or *τὰ κακά* prevail in human life see above, p. 47.

THE STATE AND THE COSMOS. THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF NATURAL LAW

THE various contributions to the problem of the Deity which we have studied in earlier chapters are combined in the theology of *Laws* 10. We have observed that the theory of Soul's cosmic status which is developed in the first part of the book is presupposed in some later sections; but beyond this, no attempt is discernible to coördinate the different aspects of the theological problem in a comprehensive and unified theory. On the contrary, each of the three or four principal approaches has been preserved with its characteristic features. We should recognize each of them as an attempt to conceive and express a truth that, as Plato himself would be the first to admit, is beyond human conception and expression. We should beware of playing off the ideas embodied in one section against those of the others and also of regarding any of these ideas as final or dogmatically fixed. Each of these lines of thought points in some definite direction and each leads us from its peculiar starting point a long way towards the true conception of the Deity—as close as it is possible for human beings to reach. Somewhere these different lines must converge, but Plato wisely refrained from making them converge. Let us once more recall his words: 'The father and maker of all this Universe is past finding out, and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible.'

While it is true that all the different approaches to the problem of religion are combined in the exposition of *Laws* 10, the strongest and most heavily fortified line of thought is obviously the elaborate theory of movements which Plato sets forth in the first section of the book. His new concept of the Deity has taken



shape in connection with a new interpretation and vindication of the realm of physical change. The concept of a divine World-Soul as the fountain of movements and as the intelligent power controlling the world of Becoming is the cornerstone of the whole new system. This new theory of Soul and the tradition of mystery-religion with its belief in successive incarnations of souls are combined in this book to suggest a world-order in which *ψυχή* and whatever is of its kindred predominate. Yet while the tenets of the mysteries have left their mark on this world-view, physics provides the basis for Plato's theology. Like those other attempts at a new religion with which we have dealt in Chapter III, Plato's philosophical religion rests on a new interpretation of the Cosmos. Human experience may be understood from a religious point of view, and political institutions may receive a religious sanction; but before either can be done the validity of religion itself has to be established on cosmic grounds. Political and individual human life has lost its original religious significance and is no longer capable of creating a new and vital religion.

Plato does, however, strive to establish a new alliance between the State and Religion. In his City, religion is to be controlled and guarded by the political authorities; every private religion and all private worship are rigidly suppressed. As of old, religion is to give a deeper meaning and an atmosphere of sanctity to the political community. This seems a problematic undertaking. For how can his cosmic religion help towards such ends? How can it take over the functions once performed by an entirely different type of religion which, through sharing a long history with the Polis, had itself acquired a political character and role? <sup>1</sup> How can the World-Soul or the star-gods inspire the citizens with loyalty towards their state; how can these powers support political institutions or act as guardians of law and morality? They seem too remote from the realm of political actions and developments. Is it not evident that we have to regard them as strangers to the life of the city? We have seen that even to prove the existence of a divine Providence Plato had found it necessary to cease thinking in terms of such deities and to base his argu-

ments on considerations of a very different kind. Does this not indicate that it was far from easy to establish a really convincing bond between the cosmic realm and the sphere of human life and activities? To make such gods vital and operative on the political stage and to make them share the experiences of the community would seem an even more difficult task. On the face of it, Plato's new religion seems to give better moral and intellectual support to men who regarded themselves as parts of the Cosmos and citizens of the Universe than to the members of a political community. Have we not just seen that where Plato is thinking in terms of the 'Whole' and its 'parts'<sup>2</sup> the whole to which he refers is the cosmic whole, not the political?

What shall we think of Plato's attempt to enlist the forces of religion for the support of his City? Surely there is a difference between organizations which rest on the primeval identity of the religious and the political spheres and those in which an artificial relationship between the two has been created. 'Theocracy' may be an original growth or an afterthought, and the religious element in a theocratic organization may have a natural reference to political affairs or may have been pressed into the service of political ends. In which of these two categories are we to class Plato's politico-religious ideology? Is it beyond doubt that his political and his religious doctrines are intrinsically different? And how much weight shall we give to the fact that his World-Soul and his teleological view of the Universe could so readily be incorporated by the Stoics in a system that puts emphasis on God, the individual, and the Cosmos, yet not on the body politic?

Surely a history of the ideological alliance between the spiritual and the terrestrial power, between 'throne' and 'altar' would have to take Plato for its starting point. And yet, I think, a closer scrutiny of the place of Law in Plato's system will reveal a more organic connection between Plato's religious ideas and his political theory. There can be little doubt that in different contexts Plato takes different views of the value and function of 'law'. 'Law' (*νόμος*) is not the source from which he normally expects salvation, and he may quite well conceive of a political order

in which positive laws are of but small importance. In fact, 'laws' may be downright detrimental. In the *Republic*, the value of laws as a stabilizing element in the proposed State is decidedly inferior to that of education.<sup>3</sup> Even in the *Laws* itself there are passages, notably one in Book 9, where it is said that if true knowledge and Reason (*voûs*) are present laws may well be dispensed with, since written laws with their dogmatic and rigid regulations have inevitable shortcomings. In the *Statesman* the same view is developed at greater length.<sup>4</sup> And we need not doubt that to many laws which were in force in the Greek cities Plato would readily apply the same explanation that he so passionately rejects whenever the *right* kind of law is discussed—he would admit that they had been set up in accordance with what happened at a particular time to appear just or advantageous to a particular group of more or less irresponsible people, and that they had no basis in the permanent nature of things.<sup>5</sup> Still such laws are but poor 'imitations' (*μιμήσεις*) of the right type of 'Law', and the origin or status of the right law must never be confused with that of imitations.

'Law', that is true law, is among the entities which in Book 10 appear in the train of Soul. The others, to wit Mind, Knowledge, Craftsmanship, Opinion, Desire have already been discussed.<sup>6</sup> We have also seen that by defending the primacy of Soul Plato simultaneously established the priority of everything else spiritual over things material and proved its fundamental validity and reality. And however numerous may be the changes in Plato's appraisal of 'law'—but needless to say, the variety of approaches that we have listed implies no fundamental inconsistency or uncertainty—in the *Laws* Plato unquestionably attacks the problem of political and social regeneration along legislative lines. It is, therefore, very important that Law should be recognized as a spiritual entity close in standing and nature to the basic power of the Cosmos. We can now understand why, when embarking on the discussion of theology, Plato felt that he was coming to the support of Law.<sup>7</sup> 'Who helps the gods helps the laws' would have been true in the old city-state, and is again true, though in a different sense, in Plato's new State.

It is not quite easy to decide whether Plato regards Law as an immediate manifestation of Soul, or rather of Mind, which in turn is closely allied to Soul.<sup>8</sup> Nor would it, in the last analysis, make much difference. Law is 'begotten by Mind', and if other essences begotten of Soul or Mind hold an exalted position in the order of things, Law must hold one too. Thus Plato's religion includes a vindication on cosmic grounds of the spiritual item—Law—on which he relies in constructing his City, and this recognition of Law as a part of the kingdom of Soul provides the sanction of Plato's whole system of legislation.

We need not, however, suppose that Law is the only concept in Plato's political philosophy that stands in close relation to the sources of all spiritual reality: *τέχνη* follows in the train of Soul no less than does *νόμος*; and the political *τέχνη* of true statesmanship, which strives to realize the basic political values, would thus be linked to Soul and Mind.<sup>9</sup> Another member of Soul's family is *ἐπιμέλεια* (Care or Administration). We also read in the same book of the *Laws* that Soul is the source of the good (as well as of the bad);<sup>10</sup> on the strength of this proposition the statesman or legislator who conforms his actions to the good may consider himself the agent of that supreme power. Nor should it be difficult, when all this has been said, to see that there must be a close connection between Justice (*δικαιοσύνη*) and the Soul, even though Plato here fails to say so explicitly.

Naturally, all this applies only to true Law, true Justice, not to shams or substitutes. Here we need not dwell on the fact that Plato's God is the norm and the standard ('God is to us the measure of all things and much more so than Man, as they say'<sup>11</sup>). God is something absolute, not something relative. Plato's adversaries are relativists; in dealing with the problem of Justice, they carry their relativism to extremes.<sup>12</sup>

Now what is the nature and what are the characteristics of the genuine type of law that follows in the train of the good World-Soul? The best way of answering this question would be to analyze the laws embodied in Plato's last work, for these laws, if any, must correspond to Plato's conception of the ideal type. What is the difference between these laws and those actu-

ally obtaining in Greek cities? On legislation as commonly practised in Greece Plato has these scathing comments: 'There is nothing wonderful in states going astray with their experiments (*πλανᾶσθαι*) as they do. The reason is that their legislators have such different aims. Some lay down as a rule of justice that certain individuals should reign, whether they be good or bad, others that the citizens should be rich. The tendency of others is towards freedom, and some legislate with a view to two things at once: they want to be free and at the same time to rule over others.' <sup>13</sup> Plato's own aim from the beginning of the work had been the promotion of the true goods of human life, the virtues. I do not maintain that this is the only appropriate description of his object but, however we may express it, certainly material goods are throughout the work treated as secondary to goods of the soul.

Of all the things which a man has, next to the gods, his soul is the most divine and most truly his own. Now in every man there are two parts: the better and superior, which rules, and the worse and inferior, which serves; and the ruling part of him is always to be preferred to the subject. Therefore I am right in bidding every one next to the gods, who are our masters, and those who in order follow them [certain demons] to honor his own soul. . . . When any one prefers beauty to virtue, what is this but the real and utter dishonor of the soul? For such a preference implies that the body is more honorable than the soul; and this is false, for nothing of earthly origin is more honorable than the Olympian [the divine], and he who thinks otherwise of the soul has no idea how greatly he undervalues this wonderful possession. . . . He who does not estimate the base and evil as well as the good and noble according to the standard of the legislator, and abstain in every possible way from the one and practice the other to the utmost of his power, does not know that in all these respects he is most foully and disgracefully abusing his soul, which is the divinest part of man. . . . The soul is second in honor [God having been placed first]; and third, as every one will perceive, comes the honor of the body in natural order.<sup>14</sup>

True laws, in other words, are those which establish in human life a priority comparable to that which Plato has discovered in the Universe. True laws teach the citizens to consider bodily and material goods inferior (and secondary in 'honor') to goods of the soul, and the true cosmological system shows how in the Universe Soul and her kindred take precedence over the purely physical and material.

If Law or the laws have a cosmic basis, we may rightly describe Plato's legal philosophy as a theory of 'natural law', and Plato would claim no less a place in the history of this tradition than in that of the alliance between the terrestrial and the spiritual power. To be sure, a belief in 'natural law' must always imply, and rest on, some definite concept and theory of 'Nature'—if 'natural law' is to be more than an empty phrase. With the Stoics and their modern successors, the rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the idea of 'natural law' is based on a firm belief in the rule of Reason in the Universe and in human life.<sup>15</sup> For Rousseau, 'human nature' (to which he confines himself) is irrational and instinctive, but at the same time definitely gregarious, so that the 'general will' cannot be wrong when acting as legislator. Plato's laws are in accord with Nature because they establish on the political stage an order and hierarchy of values corresponding to those which obtain in the Universe. Of course Plato's adversaries too are believers in 'natural laws', and their conception of a 'law of nature' is similarly determined by their views concerning the basic forces and tendencies in 'nature'.<sup>16</sup> For them 'nature' everywhere exhibits the triumph and the right of the stronger. These views, reported in more than one passage of the *Laws*, are at bottom identical with those which Callicles defends with brutal frankness in *Gorgias*. It is evident from both *Gorgias* and the *Laws* that these views are diametrically opposed to Plato's. Through his new interpretation of 'nature' Plato supplied the foundation for a concept morally much more satisfactory, in fact a profoundly ethical concept of 'natural law'. It is evident that the Stoics are greatly in his debt.

It is now clear why Plato could think that a moral bulwark was provided for his City by the belief in the supremacy of a spiritual world-power that works in alliance with Reason and 'educates everything' towards right and perfect growth.<sup>17</sup> The State and Law may well be founded on Nature, if in Nature herself the mental, intellectual, and moral values have a fixed and distinguished place, if Order, Rationality, Harmony, and Co-operation are in ascendance, and if the Good itself has a cosmic status. If the Universe were the product of material forces indifferent to good and bad, as Plato's adversaries describe it, it would be futile to postulate a natural foundation for the Just State.

In comparing the *Laws* with the *Republic* it strikes us as a new departure that the cosmic order and the divine element should be invoked in support of an analogous political order, and that the rule of Law in the City and the realization in it of the higher values should be seen against this larger background.<sup>18</sup> Is this cosmic order the all-inclusive order, and are human action and political enterprise valuable in the measure in which they accord with the principles that determine the organization of the Universe?

It would not seem at all impossible for Plato to conceive of human behavior as a specific instance of cosmic behavior and of human efforts as manifestations of cosmic tendencies. In *Timaeus* the antagonism between man's better self, his Reason, and the lower parts of his nature is a phase of the more fundamental opposition between Mind and 'Necessity' which characterizes the Universe as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Rhythm and Reason face man in his environment in various forms, and by no means the least important of these is the rhythmical and reasonable nature of the celestial movements, by the study of which he may strengthen the rational element in himself. Still we have no right to say, even of the aged Plato, that this cosmic background was indispensable to his thought on either Man or the State. To the end of his life these two subjects are as much in the centre of his thought as they ever had been, and the fact that no fewer than nine books of the *Laws*—full of the most exquisite wisdom about human

existence, the goods of life, and the ways and means of attaining them—precede the discussion of physics and theology shows clearly enough that Plato still treats ethics and politics as subjects in their own right. It may also be said that man remains for him primarily a political being, and that it still is as natural for Plato to regard him thus as to consider him part of the Cosmos.<sup>20</sup>

Taken as a whole *Laws* 10 represents a most powerful and comprehensive defense of the spiritual world *in toto*, and this spiritual world includes the political sphere and all moral and political values. Throughout the *Laws*, Plato's legislation keeps in closest contact with the basic spiritual and moral forces; in fact it derives its strength, appeal, and power of persuasion from intimate contact with the deeper layers of human existence. The work is more than a legislative system; it is a reintegration of Greek life, a restoration of its true form, which from Plato's point of view would appear to have been in process of disintegration for at least a century. (It is in this context noteworthy that Plato speaks with approval of the religious attitude of early and primitive people who were not yet affected by the subtleties of speculation and so-called wisdom.<sup>21</sup>) In the *Laws* the City becomes once more the property of the gods. Each part of the territory will be under their protection. The life of the family or clan will have its centre in the worship of the tutelary gods. Religious festivals, processions, cult activities will at regular intervals enter the individual's life and make him at every turn feel close to the divine powers. Again and again appeal is made to religion, worship, cult practice, in short to the divine element in every form, to sanction and sanctify through its vitalizing presence the regulations which Plato wishes to see in force.<sup>22</sup>

There is an archaic atmosphere about the work. There is no room in it for intellectualism, for newfangled cleverness, rationalistic construction, or individualistic speculation. Piety and profound reverence for time-honored custom characterize Plato's attitude throughout the work. In comparison with the *Laws* even the *Republic* strikes us as too exclusively rational, inspired by excessive confidence in human capacities, and indifferent—at least on the surface—to the powers of tradition. In the *Laws* we



are from beginning to end aware of the existence of a spiritual order of things. The explicit, philosophical vindication of this order is but one of Plato's efforts to vitalize it, and merely an interlude in the work as a whole. But to effect this vindication Plato had to rely on a theory entirely novel and not at all archaic. Such a theory could not have taken shape if the presence of the divine powers had still been felt and their rule still undisputed in their original domain, family and city. Plato brings religion back into both, and yet to convince himself and his contemporaries of its validity he finds it necessary to analyze the structure of the Cosmos and to explore the nature and form of physical processes. Paradoxical though it may sound, Plato's attitude to religion is at the same time archaic and Hellenistic. While he tried to revive the past he prepared the way for the future. While he was anxious to restore the original unity of religion and political life, he became the founder of 'natural theology'.

In *Gorgias* Socrates tries to bring home to Callicles that he has failed to grasp the importance of the principles of Form, Order, Balance, and Justice. Their presence or absence accounts for the difference between the right and the wrong condition of the human soul and between the right and the wrong outlook on human life. In order to reinforce the point, Socrates reminds him of the important role played by the same principles in the Cosmos: 'The wise tell us that communion and friendship and orderliness and temperance and justice bind together heaven and earth and gods and men, and that this universe is therefore called Order (κόσμος), not disorder (ἀκοσμία) or misrule, my friend.'<sup>23</sup> The passage shows how early Plato realized that the issues involved in the interpretation of the Universe were fundamentally identical with those confronting the moralist, the political thinker, and the statesman. And what had been his conviction when he wrote *Gorgias* was still his belief at the time when he composed the *Laws*, though both his cosmic and his political theories had of course been elaborated in the meantime and had come to embrace more details.<sup>24</sup> Now since he was aware of the similarity and basic identity of the issues in both fields, Plato could also attempt to trace the doctrines of his old adversaries,

the ethical relativists and the champions of the 'will to power', to the same fundamental error to which he traces the equally mistaken materialistic theory of Nature. We have already dealt with the account given at the beginning of *Laws* 10 of the system which Plato is anxious to refute. This account shows clearly how a mechanical explanation of the entities and processes in the physical world will lead its proponent to a position of ethical relativism and scepticism with regard to political and social standards.<sup>25</sup> The evolutionary materialists have no difficulty in 'explaining' Law and Justice. As we know, they regard all ethical norms as a matter of human convention, as 'artificial' in origin, as contrary to 'Nature'. But Justice and the Just are in an even worse position than the Good or the Beautiful. For while they share the quality of artificiality with the other norms they have the additional disadvantage of relativity. 'Justice' (τὸ δίκαιον) varies from place to place, and the specific meaning of the term depends on the prevailing social conditions. Plato, when about to embark on his proofs for the existence of God, announces that his own totally different approach will restore Law to its true position and status.<sup>26</sup>

It is not quite easy for us to say whether thinkers of the fifth or fourth century really used a materialistic cosmology as basis for a relativistic doctrine and a destructive criticism of moral standards. It may well have been Plato's own and new realization that ethical nominalism and relativism were the logical outgrowth of physical materialism, and it is at least possible that this realization led him to combine in his account of his adversaries' position theories which may never actually have been embodied in one and the same system.<sup>27</sup> We should like to know whether Plato really considered all earlier philosophers and political thinkers as without exception guilty of the fundamental mistake with which he charges them. From his account we may suppose that every one of them is under accusation; and indeed he may have thought that those who avoided the fatal error of positing one or several material elements had committed other mistakes, inasmuch as they suggested purely mechanical explanations of physical phenomena, brought 'Chance' (τύχη) into their evolutionary

system, or treated the growth of civilization and the Polis as an aberration from the way pointed by Nature. One and all, they failed to realize the autonomy of spiritual, moral, and cultural values. In other words, Plato seems to let nobody depart unscathed on this day of philosophical reckoning.<sup>28</sup> While developing his own theological position into a system comprehensive enough to include the autonomy and priority of everything spiritual and mind-like, he matches it against an alternative philosophy which is evidently an integration of the more significant doctrines, cosmological, physical, ethical, and political, that had been put forward before his day. And for achieving both ends, the constructive as well as the critical, the concept of the divine World-Soul affords even greater help than the theory of eternal Ideas.

We have noticed, at least in one instance, that the World-Soul has taken over functions previously fulfilled by the Ideas. Certain concepts such as Knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) and Craftsmanship (*τέχνη*) are elevated to positions of great dignity on the strength of their affinity to Soul. Soul is even described as the 'cause of the Good'. This does not in any way imply that the theory of Ideas has been abandoned by Plato—in fact certain passages in the *Laws* are evidence to the contrary;<sup>29</sup> it does not even suggest a shift of emphasis from this doctrine to an idealistic and religious interpretation of the Cosmos. Rather we should again bear in mind that Plato's theology is an essential part of his attempt to show the power exercised by the eternal entities and values over the visible world. Reason, Regularity, Order, Form, Harmony are not limited to the sphere of *τὰ ὄντα*. They permeate the realm of Becoming. It is God who makes them extend their rule over it. And the new conception of the world of Becoming proves its philosophical vitality by attracting and crystallizing around itself certain philosophical concepts of older standing in Plato's system.

## NOTES

1 See Chapter I. I must emphasize again that religion had always had a place, and a most important one, in the city-state. It is not Plato who creates the re-

relationship between the two. For a different view see George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York, 1937), pp. 84 ff. (see also p. 161). Even 'religious persecution' is nothing entirely new; see above, p. 30, and also p. 8, where I have said that to question the gods of the city would have been an absurdity. Thus, there had been no need for laws and legal procedure to protect them.

2 10. 903 b ff.

3 *Rep.* 4. 425-6. For what follows cf. George H. Sabine, *op. cit.* (above, Note 1), pp. 68 ff. and Barker, *op. cit.* (Chapter IV, Note 11), pp. 301-7. Glenn R. Morrow in his very interesting paper, 'Plato and the Rule of Law', *Philosoph. Rev.* 50 (1941). 105-26, discusses certain aspects of νόμος in Plato with which I cannot here deal.

4 *Legg.* 9. 875 c-d; *Polit.* 293 e ff. (also 301 e ff.). Cf. also *Legg.* 6. 769 d with Shorey's notes in *What Plato Said*, p. 635. For an appraisal of νόμος see also *Legg.* 6. 780 d. Cf. Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Law of Slavery in its Relation to Greek Law*, p. 13, in *Illinois Stud. in Lang. and Lit.* 25. 3 (Urbana, Ill., 1939).

5 *Gorg.* 483 b ff.; *Rep.* 1. 338 e ff.; *Theaet.* 167 c, 172 a, 177 c; *Legg.* 4. 714 b f.; 10. 889 e ff.

6 See above, p. 144.

7 890 d. Grammatically there is nothing wrong with the two datives, νόμῳ and λόγῳ: d 4-5. Cf. Friedländer, *Plato*, vol. 2: *Die Platonischen Schriften* (Berlin, 1931), p. 674, n. 1. But in view of c 6, νόμῳ αὐτῷ βοηθήσαι, it is difficult to believe that Plato brought in νόμος at c 4.

8 At 4. 714 a and 12. 957 c Plato suggests an etymological connection between νόμος and νόμος. See also 1. 632 c; 3. 688 b; 10. 890 d; 12. 967 d-e.

9 890 d, 892 b. For the τέχνη and ἐπιστήμη of true statesmanship cf. the *Statesman* throughout, especially 258 b ff., 292 b ff.

10 896 d. The sentence affirms that Soul is the source of everything good, bad, just, unjust, and the like. This approach is different from, though not necessarily incompatible with, that of *Rep.* 6. 508 e-509 b. It is supplementary to it in the same way in which the *Laws* as a whole is supplementary to the *Republic* as a whole. Nothing in the *Laws*, least of all this passage, makes it necessary to assume that Plato could no longer believe in the Idea of the Good as a cause of individual goods (νόμῳ, which is stressed at 897 b, could well serve as a link between ψυχή and the realm of Ideas; granted certain differences of context and orientation, *Rep.* 6. 508 d may well be compared with *Legg.* 10. 896 e-897 a). I find no difficulty in admitting the fundamental unity and persistence of the basic trends of Plato's thought and yet at the same time insisting that certain phases of his philosophy took shape later than others or gained in importance.

11 *Legg.* 4. 716 c; cf. *Theaet.* 152 a.

12 See 889 e f. and the other passages mentioned in Note 5, above.

13 12. 962 d ff. Contrast *ibid.* d, 963 a, 964 c. See also 1. 631 b ff., 632 d ff.; 3. 697 a-c; 6. 757 c ff. Cf. Shorey in *Class. Phil.* 9 (1914), 362 f. In the *Seventh Letter* (337 a; c) Plato emphasizes that no good can be expected from laws which serve the interests and are πρὸς ἡδονήν of a faction. Cf. *Legg.* 4. 715 a ff.

14 5. 726, 727, 728 (for the intimate relation between the gods and the goods of the soul cf. 4. 716 a, c ff.). See also 1. 631 b ff.; 3. 697 a-c; 5. 743 e; *Critias* 120 e. Another very characteristic passage is *Epist.* 8. 355 a.

15 Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 2. *passim*, e. g. 276 ff., 450 ff. See also Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven, 1932), pp. 51 ff.

16 See the passages mentioned above in Note 5 and also 3. 690 b-c where

Plato contrasts Pindar's conception of *φύσις* (which is endorsed by Callicles in *Gorg.* 484 b) with his own. For the concept of a 'law of nature' before Plato cf. George H. Sabine, *op. cit.* (Note 1 above), pp. 28-32; for the Stoic concept cf. *ibid.*, pp. 149 ff. Plato's contribution has, as far as I can see, not yet been recognized. It was left to the Stoics to combine the Platonic concept with a belief in the brotherhood of all men.

17 897 b. I take it that *ὁρθά* and *εὐδαίμονα* are the results of Soul's *παιδαγωγία*. Cf. *πάντα αὖ τὰναντία τοῦτοις ἀπεργάζεται* in the following line; the three or four words preceding *ὁρθά* are uncertain.

18 Cf. Friedländer, *op. cit.* (Note 7 above) 2. 678.

19 Cf. my comments on *Timaeus* (above, p. 106), which should also be compared to the sentences next following.

20 Wilamowitz (*Plato* 1. 700) remarks pertinently to 903 b: 'Diese Gedanken . . . stimmen vollkommen zu der stoischen Auffassung des Weltregiments. So hat sich der Kaiser Marcus gefühlt.' Cf. also above, p. 156, and below, p. 184.

21 3. 679 c.

22 4. 717 a; 5. 729 e ff., 738 b ff., 740 c, 741 c, 745 b; 6. 771 d, 774 a ff.; 7. 803 c ff.; 8. 828 a ff.; and many other passages. Cf. the proem of the whole work and passages like 4. 915 e f. See Paul Elmer More's chapter on 'Worship', *op. cit.*, pp. 278-309; Morrow, *op. cit.* (Note 4 above), p. 128; A. H. Chase, *The Influence of Athenian Institutions upon Plato's Laws* (Harv. Stud. in Class. 44 [1933]), pp. 134, 149.

23 *Gorg.* 507 e ff.; see also the preceding discussion on *κόσμος* and *τάξις* of the soul and their importance for the right life.

24 Cf. Note 10, above.

25 889 e ff.; cf. Diès, *op. cit.*, pp. 526 f. Cf. Barker, *op. cit.* (Chapter IV, Note 12), pp. 363 f.

26 890 d (cf. Note 7, above). Cf. Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 364 f.

27 I speak with less confidence now than I did five years ago—see *T. A. P. A.* 67 (1936). 209 and n. 5—for I now think that certain Hellenistic theories allow a reconstruction, within certain limits, of the doctrines which Plato opposes. I hope to return to this subject in a later study.

28 See Legg. 12. 967 a-b for a slightly friendlier judgment.

29 See especially 12. 963 b ff., 964 a, 965 c, 966 a. Cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 497. On 'soul' as cause (and the relation between this theory and the causal function of the Ideas) see De Lacy, *loc. cit.* (Chapter V, Note 5), pp. 106-15. I disagree with De Lacy on one point: as far as I can see it is not Soul (*ψυχή*) but Mind (*νοῦς*) that acts along teleological lines.

## CONCLUSION



## INFLUENCE AND TRANSFORMATIONS

IT WOULD be difficult to name a later theological system that is not in some way or other, directly or indirectly, indebted to Plato. This fact is all the more remarkable since Plato had wisely refrained from lifting the veil from the final secret and had only indicated directions in which to look for it. On the other hand, as we have seen especially in the last chapter, the bearing of Plato's suggestions is by no means confined to theology in the strict sense of the word. The remoulding power of his revolutionary ideas extends far into adjoining fields, leaves a deep mark on significant concepts within their borders. By presenting the nature of the divine principle in a new light Plato transformed 'physics' and created a new hierarchy of values. Nor is this all. A history of the influence of Plato's theology would have to include the relation between religion and the State in the post-Platonic eras; all theories of 'natural law' or of a metaphysical basis for ethics, all ideas concerning the function of Reason in the Cosmos, the place of Soul in the world, all systems of Nature, especially those that recognize a spiritual principle, and finally—though we have by no means exhausted the subjects—all speculations about the nature of evil, true and apparent, would have to form a part of this history. We do not intend to embark on so ambitious a project; our aim in this concluding chapter is merely to indicate a few of the more important stages and transformations through which Plato's theological thought was to pass in the next few centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Plato was the last Greek to discuss the nature of the gods and man's attitude to the deity in the context of a political system; he still felt and recognized the historical connection and interpenetration of these two spheres of human life and thought. Aristotle



and the Hellenistic thinkers ignored this relationship completely. They could take it for granted that God's place was in Nature; the fact that the cities in which they lived maintained certain cults and worshipped certain gods was for them devoid of deeper philosophical interest. Hellenistic rulers, following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, claimed divine honors and divine inspiration for themselves, and thus established a new type of government which was at the same time a rather novel variety of alliance between the State and religion. Writers who undertook to explain or justify this type of theocracy could, and in some instances probably did, find ideological support in Plato's doctrine of a divine norm for things human and in the Pythagorean-Platonic ideal of a life in accordance with the divine principle and its earthly manifestations.<sup>2</sup> But these intellectual efforts were apart from the main road of the development of Greek thought.

Philosophy and philosophically inspired religion continued to find God in nature. The Cosmos remains divine. The celestial region, the regular movements of the stars and planets, their harmony and *concentus* are recognized as the immediate expression and manifestation of the divine in nature. With Philippus of Opus, the author of the *Epinomis*, Plato's astral religion takes on a dogmatic character.<sup>3</sup> Astrology thrives on the conviction that the stars are gods and establishes a new relation between gods and men. But important though the growth of astrology was, it was but a symptom of the new religious outlook; the confidence in an intimate religious bond between man and the celestial region found other expressions.<sup>4</sup>

Easily the most important testimony for this new feeling for the religious and divine quality of the Cosmos is Aristotle's famous variation of Plato's image of the Cave. A strain of cosmic piety, even more marked than anything of the kind that we find in Plato, is discernible in the magnificent passage in which he wonders what would be the reactions of men who had lived under the earth all their life and were suddenly faced with the spectacle of earth and sea and sky. 'When they had learnt the greatness of the clouds and the power of the winds, when they

had gazed on the sun and recognized his greatness and beauty and the efficacy with which he causes day by spreading his light through the whole sky, when moreover, night having darkened the lands, they perceived the whole sky laid out and adorned with stars, and the variety of the lights of the moon, now waxing now waning, and the risings and settings of them all and their courses ratified and immutable to all eternity—when they saw this they would straightway think that there are gods and that these are the mighty works of gods.’<sup>5</sup> In the dialogue *On Philosophy* where he speaks thus Aristotle still shares Plato’s feeling for the divine nature of the ‘star-souls’ and of the Cosmos as a whole. Nor would it be correct to say that later, when his Philosophy of Nature had matured, the Universe became entirely divested of its divine quality. Yet the source of its divine character, the deity itself, moves from the Universe to its circumference. The ether, Aristotle’s ‘fifth element’, takes over some functions of Plato’s World-Soul. God himself is no longer within the Cosmos.

Plato had, on the whole, favored a view of the deity as immanent. The World-Soul, his ‘first mover’, spreads out through the Universe and directs its changes and processes from within. But the alternative concept of a transcendent principle is at least foreshadowed in Plato. In the *Laws* it is said that the souls need not actually ‘reside’ in the stars which they move. Still less is the divine ‘Craftsman’ of *Timaeus* within the Cosmos or a part of it. Nevertheless Aristotle’s introduction of a transcendent First Mover is a definite step beyond Plato.<sup>6</sup>

Aristotle’s God is transcendent; the Stoic God is immanent. Both theological systems represent developments of Plato’s view, but in opposite directions. In his *Physics*, especially the later books, Aristotle reorganized and systematized Plato’s philosophy of movement. As in the Platonic scheme, this system culminates in a source of all movements, the first mover. But through a careful logical analysis of the nature of movement Aristotle convinces himself that the ‘first mover’ himself must be unmoved and different from the ‘first moved’.<sup>7</sup> The ‘first moved’ is the

outermost sphere of the Universe, which communicates its movements to the other spheres. The First Mover, who is Aristotle's God, affects the Universe without being part of it.

This is the conclusion to which physics leads. But to define the nature of this divine principle is no longer the task of physics but of metaphysics. Since Aristotle was opposed to the Platonic concept of Being and did not recognize the fundamental opposition between sensual and nonsensual entities, he could no longer conceive of God as a mediator between these two realms. His own approach corresponds to and is based on his new concept of Being. For him 'Reality' is a concretion of matter and form, the element of form being unable to subsist otherwise than in and as a concrete individual. The different kinds of entities constitute a hierarchy, each of them being potentially what the next higher 'form' is actually, and the whole hierarchy shows the increasing domination of the principle of form over matter. The highest form which can exist in only one individuation is completely free of physical or material ingredients. It is pure Form, pure Mind, pure Actuality. Thus the hierarchy of beings culminates in the same entity as the hierarchy of movements, if this phrase may be used; and we may add that the system of 'goods' which Aristotle builds up in his ethics similarly culminates in the recognition of a highest good which is the consummation of human happiness, and basically identical (though inferior in intensity) with the type of life led by the divine principle, the life of contemplation, the activity of pure thought.<sup>8</sup> For Aristotle would agree with the earlier thinkers who held that Mind and the act of thinking (which must not be understood as discursive thinking) were the only mode of existence and activity worthy of God. In this respect Aristotle may in fact be said to carry on the tradition of Xenophanes, Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, and in part at least also that of Plato, though as he has redefined the place of divine intelligence in the scheme of beings, so he has also something new to say about God's relation to the world and about the object of God's thought.

But, the most truly epoch-making of all these important innovations is that God has now come to head the 'chain of beings'.

Not only movement, but also life and existence, 'hang', as Aristotle puts it, on the highest being. Plato by identifying true Being with the 'Forms' had made it difficult, if not impossible, for himself to determine God's place in the realm of Being. He would not of course deny, nay, as we have seen,<sup>9</sup> he would emphatically assert, the reality of the imperishable Cosmos permeated by the divine World-Soul. But for him God is an essence different from the Forms, and his function is to impart to the physical world essential characteristics of the Forms. To put it in Aristotelian terms, Plato's God is a moving cause rather than a formal cause, whereas Aristotle's is the moving cause *par excellence* and yet, at the same time, the coping stone in the realm of Aristotle's concrete forms and individual organisms. Aristotle, then, and not Plato is the author of the classical concept of God as the supreme being and the primary or ultimate reality, though Plato's philosophy, we need hardly say, was historically the indispensable background and gave the impulse to this new departure.<sup>10</sup>

It is impossible to imagine what later theology would have been without this doctrine of the hierarchy of Beings and God's place in it. To be sure, the hierarchy of beings or hypostases which confronted the Christians when they first attempted to formulate their creed in philosophical terms was not Aristotle's. And it was not in the third, but in the thirteenth century A. D. that Aristotelian ontology furnished the framework and material for a Christian philosophy. Yet even the classical formulation of Christian doctrine in Aristotelian terms, St. Thomas' system, would hardly have been possible if the Hellenic thought which Christian theology absorbed at a much earlier but decisive stage, had not had an important structural similarity to Aristotle's. The Neoplatonic heritage which reached the schoolmen partly through St. Augustine, partly through Dionysius the Areopagite and John the Scot, could not have been, so to speak, translated back into Aristotelian concepts, had not Neoplatonism too included a scale of beings culminating in the highest entity or principle. The difference between the Aristotelian scale and the Neoplatonic are too obvious to require description, yet if we trace the philosophical pedigree of the Neoplatonic One we find Aris-

totle's Prime Mover among its ancestors.<sup>11</sup> This 'form' of God, which headed Aristotle's chain of being, had even before the classical phase of Neoplatonism become identified, not indeed with the Platonic Demiurge or the Platonic World-Soul, but with Plato's One or Idea of the Good, which similarly heads his realm of Forms. And the description of the same One in certain sections of his *Parmenides*, where it is cut off from everything else, furnished the starting point for the 'negative theology' of both the Neoplatonists and their Christian contemporaries, who characterized the 'ineffable', 'unknowable' highest principle only and entirely by negations.<sup>12</sup> In fact, these thinkers went Aristotle one better; the 'One' or 'Good' of Plotinus and Proclus and the God of Origen and St. Augustine, though said to be the source of all Being, are at the same time described as 'beyond Being'. This conception has its source in Plato, *Rep.* 6. 509b. Nor is it difficult to find other features in Plato's theology which would be more congenial to the Neoplatonic temperament than the corresponding parts of Aristotle's system. Among them are the spiritual interpretation of the Cosmos, the return of souls to God, and the origin of Life in the divine principle (as Professor Dodds has shown, the discussion of Life in the *Sophist*, which we have studied, p. 79, was not lost on later thinkers).<sup>13</sup> Finally, the notion of 'participation' (*μέθεξις*) which Plato had used to describe the relation between individual objects and the Forms is applied by the Neoplatonists to the relation between subordinate entities in the spiritual world-order and the higher and highest, such as Mind, Spirits, God (or the gods), and the ineffable One itself.<sup>14</sup>

From this discussion of the later fusion of Platonic and Aristotelian theories we must once more revert to Aristotle's own system. We have observed that his God, no longer conceived as immanent, could not, like Plato's World-Soul, move the world from within or extend throughout it. But he can still cause the movement of the physical world, since the highest sphere of heaven imitates God's unchanging Perfection by being in the next best state, that of regular, unchanging movement. God moves this sphere 'like a beloved', not through any activity of

his own, but through the mere fact of his being what he is. From this sphere movement is communicated to the other spheres, and from them in turn to the lower region which includes the earth.<sup>15</sup>

Aristotle's God is also the final and teleological cause, the perfection to which everything aspires. Aristotle emphatically asserts the teleological structure of nature, and for it coins new and striking images.<sup>16</sup> And yet, in his physical and cosmological writings, the teleological point of view is proclaimed rather than actually applied, so that we may suspect it of being a residue from Plato's system. Where Aristotle did apply it, in his biology, he gave it a new meaning, making each biological species its own 'end'.<sup>17</sup> Aristotle's system has no room for either a World-Soul or a divine Providence; and what, on the basis of *Timaeus* and *Laws* 10, might be called the spiritual aspect of Plato's cosmology, the idea of special care and preferential status given in the cosmic scheme to the soul-like or mind-like factors,<sup>18</sup> could find no favor with Aristotle. Nor can ethics and the hierarchy of human values any longer find support in Nature.

The Stoic system, on the other hand, preserved precisely those features of Plato's theology which were abandoned by Aristotle. The Stoics believe in the divinity of the world and the immanence of the divine principle. Although they are deeply indebted to Presocratic authorities, and although their identification of the divine power with a particular material element, the fire or vital heat, seems after the contributions of Plato and Aristotle a retrogression, the later cosmology and theology of Plato must have had a considerable influence upon their systems. They may have found the notion of God's omnipresence in Heraclitus, but they can hardly have remained unaffected by its more logical and responsible formulation in Plato's theory of the World-Soul; and the closely related belief in the divinity of the stars as entities with souls, living a life of divine rationality, also proved capable of being incorporated in the Stoic cosmology, though it came to them not directly from Plato but from the early Platonizing dialogues of Aristotle.<sup>19</sup> How soon the Platonic conception of a strictly centralized and teleological Universe, in which everything is 'part of a tremendous Whole' to whose perfection it

contributes, took root in the Stoic school, it is not quite easy to say, but this certainly became one of their basic dogmas and is, as in Plato, intimately connected with their belief in Providence.<sup>20</sup> What Plato had taught and Aristotle had repeated, namely that the world is organized for the realization of the good, is the general Stoic creed, and with the Stoics as with Plato Mind occupies a prominent place in the teleological scheme. The Cosmos and the World-Order are even more completely rational than in Plato; the Irrational is rigorously excluded. It is said again and again by the Stoics, that in spite of appearances to the contrary, Providence rules the world and directs human destiny and that any attempt to 'run away' from the divine will is futile. It was Plato who first formulated this Hellenistic belief in Providence,<sup>21</sup> yet Plato himself was never a fatalist. He did not teach that in whatever we do, good or bad, we do God's will. It was left to the Stoics to destroy the last vestige of human freedom by declaring that even actions undertaken in defiance of the divine law actually fulfill it.<sup>22</sup> In the divine Reason (*λόγος*) which shapes and pervades Nature the Stoic finds the norm for human conduct, the law of nature which transcends all particular laws and ought to be their source, and the criterion for discrimination between the valuable and the worthless or unimportant—just as in Plato the priority of Soul in the Cosmos had supported the priority of everything 'of Soul's kindred' in human life. To live 'in accordance with Nature' and to adjust the individual pattern of life to the pattern of universal nature is once again the object. In fact the cosmic approach to ethics, which in Plato came late and somehow remained secondary, gains considerably in importance with the Stoics. Recapitulating, we may say that the Stoics have in common with Plato, as against Aristotle, the immanence of the divine principle of all growth, the centralized cosmic scheme, the belief in Providence, the cosmic background of ethics, and the concept of 'natural law'. Since the triumph of cosmopolitanism over man's devotion to his *Polis* is by this time complete, the two doctrines last named are even more essential to the Stoics. We have seen that Plato prepared

the way for this development though he did not himself follow it out.<sup>23</sup>

Stoicism keeps God, Nature, and Man closer to one another than Aristotle did; in this respect the Stoic system is nearer to Plato's position. It may, however, be worth while, for the sake of contrast, to glance for a moment at the system of Epicurus and to point out certain phases in which it differs from all three. For Epicurus, it is a condition of man's happiness that Nature should be ruled by purely mechanical laws, and that the gods should be deprived of all contact with and every possible influence on physical phenomena. In order to organize his life in accordance with the subtle wisdom of Epicurean precepts, man must be assured that everything in nature has purely physical, and only physical causes, that even Soul is material, and that the perfection of the gods consists in complete, tranquil inactivity. God neither directs the movements and changes of the physical world from within as a principle of Order and Form (like the Platonic World-Soul), nor does he inspire its motion from without by embodying the perfection to which all other things aspire (like Aristotle's Prime Mover), nor again does he permeate the world in the shape of the finest element, which is at the same time life-giving Reason (like the Stoic *λόγος*). Epicurus certainly wishes man to use his reason and to develop a fine sensitivity for the true values of life. But human reason operates, wisdom is practised, and happiness won in a Universe that is cold to man, strange and indifferent (save that physical laws will destroy man's body and soul simultaneously), and without the least help from deities who are equally unconcerned with Nature and humanity.<sup>24</sup> Epicurus adopted, with certain technical modifications, the atomic philosophy of Democritus, which was nearer to a purely mechanistic and materialistic system than any other the Greeks ever devised. He also incorporated in his system mechanical explanations of meteorological phenomena and an evolutionary theory of life, of civilization, and of the State, 'explained' religion, derived organic entities from inorganic; in short, this phase of his philosophy must have been a perpetuation



of all those movements which Plato attacks in the first part of Book 10 of the *Laws*, and he must have been guilty of all the sins that Plato there castigates. Like Democritus, Epicurus kept ethics and the problem of human happiness separate from physics. He felt, perhaps even more clearly than Democritus, that the realm of nature had to be given over to material, unintelligent, and non-spiritual forces in order to secure happiness for man. This too was a possible basis on which to reconstruct human existence after the breakdown of the city-state and city-religion; and like other solutions this too incorporates the doctrines of the perfection of the gods and the ideal quality of their existence. On this proposition all schools in fact agreed, though each gave it a different interpretation. In his emphasis on God's freedom from all wants and on the incompatibility of physical effort with the notion of God's perfection, Epicurus even has something in common, on the surface at least, with Aristotle, who on similar grounds rejected Plato's concept of a World-Soul.<sup>25</sup> Epicurus' system is genuinely Greek, though his separation of the problem of human happiness from physical and religious theory represents an extreme in the range of possibilities open to the Greek genius. Though it is possible for us to-day to 'integrate' or 'unify' the Epicurean system by observing that its ethics and its physics presuppose the same epistemological convictions or the same concept of 'nature', it does not seem likely that Epicurus himself allowed the mechanical laws which dominate nature to extend their rule to man's spiritual, intellectual, and moral life. The 'Hippocratean' treatise *On Airs, Waters, and Places* shows that the Greeks were not absolute strangers to the view of physical determinism, but it is all the more noteworthy that none of their chief thinkers tried to apply the principle of mechanistic causality to the better part of man, his intellectual and moral self. If they accepted the idea of mechanical causation in nature, they severed ethics from physics, and discussed the problem of human happiness and perfection against a physical background but not on a physical basis. If they put man in Nature, Nature had to be 'full of gods', an intelligent, spiritual power, not the sum of mechanical laws.<sup>26</sup>

The Stoics revered their immanent divine principle as the creator and architect of the Cosmos. Their Craftsman or 'Demiurge' builds the world from within, not like Plato's mythical 'Demiurge' from without. But when in addition to the rational aspect of cosmic unity the organic as well was recognized and the Universe was felt to be one great organism, alive and divine throughout, religious thinkers came to be fascinated by Plato's concept of a World-Soul.<sup>27</sup> And as we approach the time of Christ, we notice that religious sentiment tends once again to exalt God above the Cosmos; for while the Cosmos continues to inspire religious veneration, the source and principle of its divinity is yet placed so far above it as to be remote from anything immediately present to the senses.<sup>28</sup> This kind of feeling led on the one hand to a reënthronement of Aristotle's transcendent God, the unmoved mover, and on the other hand to an interpretation of this highest, transcendent, and ineffable principle in terms of Plato's One or Idea of the Good, which had similarly been placed 'above Being'.<sup>29</sup> In the light of this conception the Demiurge or creative *logos* is transformed into a mediator between the absolute divinity of the first principle and the world, which he, not the first god, creates. Thus it happens that in the first centuries of the Christian era the concepts (1) of a divine principle existing far above all sensual, even above all intelligible reality, (2) of a divine Mind or *λόγος* constructing the Cosmos after the pattern of the intelligible world, and (3) of an immanent World-Soul extending throughout the Cosmos and present in every part of it, are, all of them, perfectly alive, and have become genuine expressions of the religious and philosophical feeling of this era. To define the true relationship between this Trinity of Gods is one of the major problems for the philosophers commonly called the Neoplatonic School. Another problem, hardly less important, was the relation between the divine principles—especially the creative *λόγος* or Demiurge—and the Ideas. Some thinkers, Plutarch, for example, even revive the dualism of a good and a bad World-Principle; others in this triumphant period of astrology still recognize the peculiar religious dignity of the stars and the heavenly region. Plotinus is aware of the parallel between

what we have called the centralized organization of the cosmic Whole and that of the ideal city.<sup>30</sup> As a true Platonist, he not only insists on the priority of everything spiritual, but makes a determined stand against the attempt at explaining Soul and whatever else belongs to the prior order of the spiritual world through physical entities, which must be secondary and derivative.<sup>31</sup> There are many passages in Plotinus which may be read as a commentary on Plato's doctrine of the contribution which every part, however small, makes to the perfection of the Whole, or on his principle of the reshuffling of souls for the sake of this perfection: 'The rise and destruction of all these forms and their modification, whether for the worse or for the better, all goes to the fulfilment of the natural unhindered life of that one living being [the Cosmos]; for it was not possible for the single thing to be as if it stood alone; nor could the final purpose work for, and be intent on, these parts; but rather for that whole of which each item is member.' 'The Reason-Principle of the Universe would be better envisaged as a wisdom creating the order of a State and setting up law for it, in full knowledge of what the citizens will do and why, and legislating with reference to this, and weaving into the pattern of these laws all their experiences and their actions and the honor and dishonor earned by these actions, so that everything almost mechanically finds its way into the symphony of the whole.'<sup>32</sup>

Evidently, then, Plotinus has in common with Plato's theology more than a few doctrines concerned with his first three *hypostases*, the famous 'Neoplatonic Trinity.' With respect to this, we do not find it difficult to recognize each member as a descendant of some important Platonic concept: the One a descendant of Plato's Idea of the Good that had been similarly placed 'beyond Being', 'Mind' a descendant of the Platonic Demiurge, and 'Soul' a descendant of the World-Soul.<sup>33</sup> The main source of the Neoplatonic doctrine of the One is, besides the isolated but very important remark in *Rep.* 6. 509b, certain sections of *Parmenides*.<sup>34</sup> In *Timaeus* the divine Mind creates the Cosmos, fixing its gaze on the realm of eternal Ideas, the archetypes of everything created. With this proposition as their ground, the Middle Platonists and

Neo-Platonists held a theory of the Ideas' existing in the divine Mind.<sup>35</sup> The primal unity of the One becomes plurality, in Plotinus, when reflected and so to speak intellectualized in the first emanation, *vous* (Mind or Spirit). Thus in his system Mind creates the intelligible world rather than the visible, the eternal archetypes rather than their physical counterparts. We read, it is true, that 'the ordering principle is twofold; there is the principle known to us as the Demiurge and there is the Soul of the All'; but on the whole we must agree with A. H. Armstrong that 'Mind for Plotinus is not really the Demiurge.'<sup>36</sup> The creative organization and just government of the visible world are the task of Soul, though so anxious is Plotinus to keep Soul from contact with the material world that he finds it necessary to distinguish between two World-Souls, a higher and a lower. The description of Soul's functions and activity agrees in essential features with that given by Plato in *Timaeus* and *Laws* 10. In Plotinus Soul is actually called the 'interpreter' between the intelligible and the visible world. Its ontological place is on the border between these two spheres; it is 'on the fringe of the intelligible realm and a neighbour to the visible.' Its orderly structure is a reflection, an 'image of the unchangeably established Wisdom.' Soul 'leads everything with intelligence.' 'The Cosmos moves in eternal movement under the influence of the intelligent Soul.' 'Soul keeps in order the [otherwise] erratic movement,' being herself oriented towards 'the best', the 'spiritual nature', and 'God'. Yet Soul is also described as the giver of life, the creator of all living beings including the world as a whole and the heavenly bodies. It 'has ordered this whole great world and moves it around, being itself a nature different from what it orders and moves around and inspires with life.' All things come into being or perish as the result of Soul's presence or absence.<sup>37</sup>

In passing from Plotinus to his Christian counterpart and virtual contemporary, Origen, we do not leave the sphere of genuinely Hellenic thought. Origen had studied philosophy with the same Platonist who was Plotinus' principal teacher, but he was familiar with Plato's own works and with those of other Platonists—indeed it seems very difficult to distinguish between the

'Platonic' and the 'Neoplatonic' features of his system. His Trinity is of course the Christian Trinity, though in discussing the Father he frequently uses the very terms, of 'negative' as well as of affirmative theology, which the Neoplatonists applied to the source of all being. He even gives to the Son some characteristics which the same school was wont to assign to 'Mind' or 'Spirit'; and in this context he actually refers to the corresponding doctrines of pagan philosophers.<sup>38</sup> When we read that the whole world 'as though it were a living being' is ruled by God's excellence and reason 'as it were by one soul', we realize that this is the closest approximation to the Platonic and Neoplatonic World-Soul that a Christian could allow himself; and when later in the same chapter, trying to understand the words, 'In Him we live and move and have our being,' he reminds himself that the whole Cosmos is kept in existence by the power of God, we are strongly tempted to regard such an interpolation of the Cosmos between God and the individual as evidence of truly Greek feeling.<sup>39</sup> This assumption may or may not be correct; what is certain is that in the Universe as Origen sees it nothing is more important than individual souls whose status in each successive incorporation is decided by their moral record. We have found the first concept and the outlines of this Universe of souls in *Laws* 10,<sup>40</sup> and it is actually there and in certain analogous descriptions in Plato's myths that Origen found the inspiration for his remarkable 'heresies' about the 'pre-existence' of souls and their various experiences after their fall from original unity with and in Mind.<sup>41</sup> As in Plato, souls are assumed to change from one class of living beings to another according to their conduct during previous incarnations. No less Platonic is Origen's assertion that souls have the origin of movement in themselves, a point which forms an important link in his argument for freedom of will.<sup>42</sup> His thesis that the heavenly bodies are alive, endowed with reason, and fit to embody souls—the same souls which come to live in angels, human beings, and animals—is supported by the following piece of good Platonic reasoning: 'No movement can be effected without soul, and no being that has soul can exist without movement. How, then, does it not go beyond the

utmost stupidity to think that beings devoid of reason move in such harmony and observe such a well-ordered and reasonable course [as the movements of the heavenly bodies]?’ The very language of this passage is not unlike that which Plato uses in a similar argument against the atheists.<sup>43</sup> By assigning to every soul the place and status it merits, God preserves the harmony of the Universe and produces an intrinsic unity out of apparent diversity. This unity is hardly different from the Whole which Plato describes in a passage of the *Laws* (examined above p. 152),<sup>44</sup> where it is said that every part however small contributes to the perfect order of the Whole. Providence manifests itself in this very care and just administration of the Universe of souls.<sup>45</sup> Souls may and indeed will progress; their improvement is described in terms of moral virtues, yet also in those of intellectual perfection, which through increased understanding of the divine order will lead them to an assimilation and finally to a return to the spiritual realm <sup>46</sup>—a conception basically Greek rather than Christian. Origen would agree with Plotinus that an existence as soul (*ψυχή*) is inferior to an existence in the Spirit (*πνεῦμα*); but the concept of a World-Soul, though probably not without attraction for him, was unacceptable to a Christian. Nor did he really need such a concept, since he had learnt from both Plato and Scripture that God himself was concerned with souls. Scripture had in fact given him the assurance of divine care, but only a Platonist would conceive of it as Origen does, as manifesting itself in a divine scheme for man’s education.

It is evident and seems to be generally recognized that the amalgamation of the Christian and the Platonic tradition is carried to extreme lengths in Origen’s system.<sup>47</sup> He had gone so far that the Church in a later period found it necessary to disavow him. But although in his daring views on the nature and fate of souls he diverged from more orthodox Christian teachers, they agree with him in the assumption and in the general characterization of an intelligible, immaterial order different in every respect from the visible, physical world, and their thought moves in that world with the same ease and naturalness as his. It is legitimate to assert that the phase of Plato’s philosophy which proved in the

long run the richest source of inspiration for theological doctrines and creeds was his theory of Ideas and philosophy of true Being, but not the part of his thought which we have in this book singled out and, with good reason I hope, regarded as his theology.

If we are right in suggesting that Plato thinks of God as the mediator between the intelligible and the physical worlds, we are bound to admit that Aristotle's concept of God as the apex of Being won out over his master's view; but it is fitting to repeat that some elements of Plato's own thought were combined with and modified the Aristotelian concept of the Prime Mover. The World-Soul, conceived as it was by Plato as mediating between the eternal and the perishable, could for this very reason be placed no higher than on the third plane by the Neoplatonists, whereas the Christians very naturally refused to recognize a cosmic Soul, and were more attracted by the concept of a Universe of souls than by that of a Universe governed by a Soul. On the other hand, the idea of a mediator between the Godhead and this world is of vital importance for Christianity, and its theological formulation owes much to Plato's concept of the Demiurge. Still more important is the fact that the spiritual world of Christian thinkers enjoys the kind of reality that Plato had ascribed to his Ideas. Not only the Ideas themselves, which survive in mediaeval philosophy as the thoughts of God,<sup>48</sup> but the intelligible world as a whole constitutes the most essential debt of Christianity to the Platonic account of true Being. To think of God as the apex of this realm has become so customary that even modern interpreters of Plato tend to treat his God as identical with his highest Idea, and to overlook or misunderstand the peculiar situation out of which Plato's theology developed.<sup>49</sup> Plato conceived of the Deity as mediating between two worlds and as imparting to the visible world the qualities which connect it with the intelligible world; but his concept was obscured in the history of Platonism. We can in fact trace this process through some stages.<sup>50</sup> Although the tension between Being and Becoming has since reappeared in the history of philosophy, there has been no revival of the Platonic position, since through the combined in-

fluence of Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, and Christianity the concept of God had in the meantime been fixed as the consummation of Being.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I am deliberately confining my attention to a few important trends in the history of post-Platonic theology. Other trends have been discussed elsewhere, e. g. in A. E. Taylor's *Platonism and its Influence in Our Debt to Greece and Rome* (Boston, 1924), pp. 97-132, especially 113 ff., which constitutes a particularly important contribution. See also Paul Shorey, *Platonism Ancient and Modern* (Berkeley, 1938), *passim*, especially pp. 15 ff., 19, 31, 49, 62 ff. One of the subjects that I do not include here is the influence of Plato's demonology; cf. Legg. 10. 903 b; *Epin.* 984 d ff.; Heinze, *Xenokrates* (see above, p. 148), pp. 78-123; A. D. Nock, *Sallustius Concerning the Gods and the Universe* (Cambridge, 1926), pp. xxxix, lxxviii. Another important subject would be the place assigned in philosophical theologies to the traditional and popular gods. For the first stages in the history of this process cf. above, p. 72 and 118; for the final stage see E. R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 257-60 on propos. 112 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e. g., W. Jaeger, *Diokles von Karystos* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 129 f.; see also pp. 134 ff., 152 f.

<sup>3</sup> See *Epinomis* 982 b ff., 984 d, 985 d, 986 b.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. P. Nilsson in *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 33 (1940). 1-8.

<sup>5</sup> Arist., *Frag.* 12 Rose; Jaeger, *Aristotle* (tr. by Richard Robinson, Oxford, 1934), p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> For details see W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 94-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Phys.*  $\Theta$  5; see  $\Theta$  6-10 for further characteristics of the 'first mover'.

<sup>8</sup> *Metaph.*  $\Delta$  7. 1072 b 14;  $\Delta$  9 *passim*; *Eth. Nic.*  $\kappa$  7. 1177 b 19-1178 a 8.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 80.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jaeger, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 142 ff., 155 ff.; Ross, *op. cit.* (above, Note 6), pp. 85-102; K. W. C. Guthrie in *Class. Quart.* 27 (1933). 162-71; 28 (1934). 90-8 for different views of the development of Aristotle's theology.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 6 ff., 12; R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge, 1937), pp. 125 ff.; A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 58 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. E. R. Dodds' important paper in *Class. Quart.* 22 (1928). 129 ff., 132, 135; also his *Proclus*, p. 312, and Raymond Klibanski, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition* (London, 1939), p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Plato, *Soph.* 247 e (see above, p. 79); cf. Dodds, *Proclus*, p. 253.

<sup>14</sup> See further for some 'Platonic' material disseminated and popularized by handbooks Nock, *op. cit.* (Note 1, above), p. xxxix.

<sup>15</sup> See *Metaph.*  $\Delta$  8 (containing his latest views on the spheres);  $\Delta$  6. 1072 a 9-17 with Ross's notes in *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924), *ad. loc.*; *De gen. et corr.* B. 10. 336 a 23-b 9. Cf. Ross, *Aristotle* (3rd ed., London, 1937), p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> E. g.,  $\Delta$  10. 1075 a 11-5, 18-21.

<sup>17</sup> This is best seen in *De part. animal.* Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, pp. 123 ff., 126; Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 386.

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 111.



19 Jaeger, *Aristotle*, pp. 138, 150, 156 f. (especially p. 156, n. 1). See also *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (ed. by Joannes ab Arnim, Berlin, 1903-24) 1. 529 f.; 2. 684-7. For the Stoic World-Soul cf. Moreau, *op. cit.* (Chapter V, Note 24), 158-81.

20 Cf. *Stoic. Vet. Frag.* 1. 98; 2. 528, 1141-51; 3. 323, 333.

21 See above, pp. 153 ff.

22 *Stoic. Vet. Frag.* 527; but cf. Cic., *De fato* 39 ff.

23 See above, p. 167.

24 See, e. g., Epic., *Epist.* 1. 76-82.

25 Arist., *De coel.* B 1. 284 a 27 ff.; A. H. Armstrong in *Class. Quart.* 32 (1938). 190, n. 4.

26 Cyril Bailey, in *Proc. Class. Assoc.* 32 (1935). 7-26, discusses this subject from a slightly different point of view. My remarks about Epicurus are no more than suggestions, but I think that they are borne out, especially by the letter to Menoeceus. Lucret. 3. 288-318 may well represent the extreme in Epicurus' application of his materialistic determinism to ethical phenomena. For Epicurus' debt to the Platonic tradition cf. Ettore Bignone, *L'Aristotele Perduto e la formazione filosofica di Epicuro* (Florence, 1936).

27 For Posidonius' concept of the World-Soul, which in important respects differs from the Neoplatonic, cf. Willy Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Problemata 1, Berlin, 1930), pp. 69 ff., 90 ff.; Karl Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie* (München, 1926), pp. 115 ff. For some later stages in the history of this concept, especially the notion of a 'sleeping' Soul, cf. Witt, *Albinus*, p. 131; Friedrich Ueberweg and Karl Prächter, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (12th ed., Berlin, 1926) 1. 536, 538, 542. For Plutarch, to whom I am not doing justice in this sketch, see in addition to Witt and Ueberweg-Prächter R. M. Jones' valuable dissertation, *The Platonism of Plutarch* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1916).

28 See, for an interesting document of this process, 'Aristotle', *De mundo* 6. For Platonic and Stoic elements in the theology (or theosophy) of Philo Judaeus cf. Ueberweg-Prächter, *op. cit.* (Note 27, above) 1. 575-7, and T. H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus* (diss., Chicago, 1919).

29 See Dodds in *Class. Quart.* 22 (1928). 136, 139; Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Armstrong, *Architecture*, p. 6 ff.

30 See *Enn.* 4. 4. 32, 39; cf. above, p. 155.

31 See, e. g., *Enn.* 5. 1. 5; 6. 1. 27; cf. above, pp. 134 ff., 143 f.

32 4. 4. 32 *extr.*, 4. 39. I am indebted to the translation by Stephen MacKenna (London, 1917-30). The thoughts here are Platonic though the Stoics may have acted as intermediaries.

33 Cf. Armstrong, *Architecture*, pp. 6, 75, 77, 87 f., 98, 100, 108, n. 4.

34 Cf. Dodds' paper cited in Note 12 above.

35 For the first stage of this theory see Theiler (see above, Note 27), pp. 17 ff., 39, who traces it to Antiochus of Ascalon. For a different hypothesis see, e. g., R. M. Jones, *Class. Phil.* 21 (1926). 317-26.

36 *Enn.* 4. 4. 10; cf. Armstrong, p. 87 (also p. 75).

37 The passages are: *Enn.* 4. 3. 11, 8. 7, 4. 10, 2. 2. 3. 12; 3. 3. 18; 5. 1. 2.

38 Origen, *De princ.* 1. 1. 5; 1. 2. 1, 4; cf. 1. 3. 1.

39 *Ibid.* 2. 1. 3.

40 Plato, *Legg.* 10. 903 d ff.

41 Cf. the interesting comment of a Byzantine scholar on *Legg.* 10. 892 c in *Scholia Platonica* (ed. by William C. Greene, Haverford, 1938), *ad loc.*: 'Hence Origen's theory of preëxistence.'

42 *De princ.* 2. 8 and 3. 1. 1. Cf. 3. 1. 20,

43 *Ibid.*, 1. 7. 3. Cf. Plato, *Legg.* 10. 887 e, 898 c.

44 See above, p. 153.

45 *Ibid.* 2. 9, especially 2. 9. 6; cf. Plato, *Legg.* 10. 903 d ff. (see above, p. 156).

46 *De princ.* 3. 6. 3 ff.; see also 4. 4. 10. The assimilation is a genuinely Platonic  $\delta\mu\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}$ . Cf. in general Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis, Studien über Origines und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus* (Berlin, 1932), *passim*, especially pp. 195-205, 315-7.

47 Cf., e. g., Hans Lietzmann, *Geschichte der Alten Kirche* (Berlin, 1932-38) 2. 305-29; F. C. Burkitt in *Cambr. Anc. Hist.* 12. 482 f.

48 See above, Note 35.

49 See the most recent attempt, by W. F. R. Hardie, *A Study in Plato*, pp. 153-6. For some other identifications of Plato's God with the Idea of the Good, see Grube, *Plato's Thought*, p. 168.

50 See above, p. 180 (on Aristotle) and p. 182 (on the Neoplatonists).



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